THE REIGN OF MIND

Jens Cavallin

ISBN 978 91 85993 51 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Parmigianini’s Self-portrait in a convex mirror.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE: PROJECT HISTORY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical details</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE, POLITICS AND CULTURAL POLICIES: $f$ OR $\Delta$?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$f$</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta$</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HUMAN CONDITION: MEDIA, SHARING, COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intervention</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reign of Mind</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW TO STUDY CULTURE: DISCIPLINE AND KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical presuppositions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some conditions for research</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatism, phenomenology, positivism: epistemological chores</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplines</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study of cultural production</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and cultural research</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and discipline</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some central conceptual issues</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production – product</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural production</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media – mass media</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular culture, mass culture, convergence</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE, SYSTEM AND FIELD: THREE THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL REALITY</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “pure” systems approach</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System and network</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System and Life-world</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPERIENCE, "ERLEBNIS" AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

CULTURAL PRODUCTION: POWER, POLICY, POLITICS

The concept of power
Power and will
Theories of power
Arendt
Lukes
Power and ownership
(Re)feudalisation, ownership and a network society

INTERDISCIPLINARITY, MEDIA STRUCTURE AND KNOWLEDGE, A REFLEXIVE OR TRANSCENDENTAL APPROACH TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Interplay of media structure and knowledge
The unifying perspective in research on cultural production
Social context - labour conditions
Reflexivity and the "drama of expectations"
A paradox of cognition

POWER AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION:

THE REIGN OF MIND

THE CULTURAL OBJECT, THE NATURAL OBJECT, THE ARTEFACTS, MEDIATISATION

INTERPLAYS – ENTANGLEMENTS - IN CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Media and the production of knowledge
Bourdieu and the journalistic field revisited
"The politics of culture" – cultural policy, popular culture, populism and Bildung

Media and the arts: legislation and politics
The politics of culture – freedom of expression, cultural policy, media policy

Media and politics

The Tyrant murder and media privileges
Media pluralism: civil(ized) society or soldiers’ boots?

Two faces of “mediatisation” of politics
Breakfast with Mr Murdoch
Scandals
Internet....................................................................................................................................... 246

CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND POWER: THE WAY AHEAD........................................... 246

Cultural production, media and power ...................................................................................... 250
The idealist perspectives ............................................................................................................. 252
The economistic perspective .................................................................................................... 252

Creating and promoting pluralism in cultural production in Europe ..................................... 253

Five roads to pluralism .............................................................................................................. 254

Compensation, controversies and paradoxes ............................................................................ 264
Broadening, mainstreaming, neutrality ..................................................................................... 264
Trust and profession .................................................................................................................. 265
Forms of Diversity/Pluralism ...................................................................................................... 266
Multi-media, cross-ownership and pluralism ............................................................................ 268
Popular education in media and culture – elite and mass ......................................................... 269

PROSPECTS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN A NEW STRUCTURE ............................... 272
Market mechanisms, digitisation and pluralism ........................................................................ 272

NEW TOOLS OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION ...................................................................... 273

The theoretical halo: metaphysics and communication ............................................................. 273
Requirements of knowledge ....................................................................................................... 276

Media structure and democratic participation ......................................................................... 279
Participation and quality – pluralism and resources ................................................................. 279
The issue of Convergence .......................................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

ON THE FUTURE OF MIND ..................................................................................................... 282

References .................................................................................................................................. 284

---

Technical note on the Web edition

This edition is a “beta-version” or a pre-print, i.e. it contains misprints and errors, subject to corrections. I am grateful for any observations from readers on this point, as well as other reactions, of course.
On Parmigianini’s Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror.

The image on the cover of this study might be a bit difficult to explain or even look a bit pretentious. So let me try to give a justification – though the image was just a very incidental finding, looking into the treasures of copies of paintings found in a data-base on the Web.

The mind, or Mind, as the rather majestic title of one of the most prestigious journals of philosophy of the English-speaking world sounds, is a rather enigmatic word, with a dwindling pre-history and history, perhaps deriving, proudly and pretentiously, to the “Gnosi seavton” in Delphi. To know yourself: this is just possible by some kind of “mirror”. And by demonstrating the presence of that mirror in a painting of “oneself” – in “distorting” the face of the object of the mirror – i.e. “myself” one also demonstrates that the idea of “direct” knowledge of “myself” is a complex (not to say “convex” or perhaps “concave”! Haha!) idea.

Something always comes “in between” you and the object of observation, (presentation, sensation, even if that object is “yourself”). This “in between” – a convex mirror in Parmigianini’s painting – might be of very diverse kinds. Mind is a term which “transcends” the borderline between “yourself”, in the intimate sense in which you (I) have a privileged access (nobody could deny the things I tell about myself, or, it makes no sense in using language as if these things are denied), and the other objects, to which there is “public access”. Mind is actually the inner and the outer in a pregnant sense, since the “outer” is constituted in our “inner” perceptions by all kinds of cultural, natural and other structural features, first of all language and other symbolic systems of expression such as mathematics.

Mind is a “mirror of nature” to paraphrase Richard Rorty. And this mirror is worthwhile examining – to see whether it is concave or convex or has any kind of other properties. Looking at the mirror means, obviously, also using a mirror, a mirror of mirrors – as anyone knows looking into two mirrors at the same time.

By no means this is a plea against objectivity, on the contrary: objectivity is constituted by this mirror of mirrors – this is the way we know the world, including the mind. The heart of objectivity is precisely seeing this mirroring of the mind. Kant called this inquiry a “critique”, that is, cutting up the flows of experience (Erfahrung) by “inserting” categories which are constituents of this mirror.

My mind and your mind are – by definition – never the same. Yet the opposite is also true: my mind is “made up” of my experiences, always cast in some form (to use another worn-out metaphor). And the form is “mine” in the sense of being used by me, but it is also not mine, that is, given to me, from my surrounding peers and masters, mothers and fathers.

Preface: Project History

The background to this study was a research project pursued 1999-2002 at Linköping University in Sweden, more precisely the Campus established in the old industrial town of Norrköping. The study was hosted by the Department of interdisciplinary studies and research, where I was attached to the Culture, Society and Media Production programme. Much inspiration for the later part of the work was given by people engaged in the Department of Culture Studies (Tema Kultur och Samhälle) being established from 2001, a process in which I was taking part.

The project (the “Media Structure Project”) resulted in four research reports (in Swedish). It was funded by the Ministry of Culture, as part of the continued analyses of media concentration pursued within a Government Commission working 1995-97, where I held the post of
Executive Secretary. That commission was dissolved without being able to present any proposals, although much material was prepared. Also its follower, a parliamentary committee, albeit arriving at some proposals for a new law, did not manage to set through its proposals for a legislation allowing for intervention against harmful cases of concentration of ownership of the mass media.

The background to the study was thus first and foremost national, that is, Swedish. I beg the pardon of my readers if too many examples are fetched from a North European country, with rather singular historical experiences, such as not having had a war since 1814 and abolishing homeland slavery in 1350 (though keeping it in its minimal Caribbean colony 500 years more).… Challenging this singularity, I have tried to contrast this experience to a wider background, firstly European, as mirrored in the work of the Council of Europe, where I served in various committees dealing with media concentration and media pluralism, but also internationally – within Unesco in the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s (on the “MacBride report” etc.).

It might disturb some readers of this study that it ranges between abstract philosophical analyses and associations to daily political debates. This is a consequence, as will be developed in the course of the text, of the general conviction, shared by many, that analysis of social change should acknowledge that “cultural production” in our era is more fundamental than “material production”, in some sense a reversal of Marx’s and Engels’s theories of base and superstructure. The concrete proposals and political issues debated are intended to corroborate this general approach, both set out in analytical arguments, and what might appear as rather esoteric philosophical analyses. Inevitably, the more concrete examples provided in the study have been subject to revision as time has passed while the work was pursued – and inevitably some examples will therefore be historical rather than fresh news when the study is read… The financial upheavals of 2008 might thus have a rather decisive impact on the economic and political fashions of thinking about market economy, free flow of capital and state interventions in financial structures.

The framework

The university tradition of the institution within which I was lucky enough to resume academic work, Linköpings Universitet, in Sweden, is marked by an effort to step out of the disciplinary bonds of scholarly structures, in a rather precise manner. Research in the social and human sciences is mostly organized according to intersectorial or interdisciplinary problem “themes”, rather than traditional disciplines. This implies that a philosopher engages in media and communication research, aside with sociologists, economists, mathematicians, historians – and that degrees awarded to postgraduate as well as doctoral students are not labelled by disciplinary traditions. The “theme” to which I was assigned was labelled “Culture and Society” - marking this transgression of disciplinary borders. The disciplinary-educated reader of this study might, as all readers of interdisciplinary research presentations, feel insecure about the specialis
t comp
tence of the author, and even be offended by the necessary “superficiality” marking precisely her or his subject matter. The reader will find that I go into sociology, economy, history, politology, physics, mathematics etc. employing the, often offensive, perspective of philosophy, as it were flying over all other disciplines.

This is, looking historically and critically, a question of “objective” – or “lens” in scholarly work. Using a “tele-lens” (12 x zoom…) you will necessarily lose the wide angle-perspective giving overview or “perspective”. And the reverse. Both perspectives are necessary – and the essence of knowledge is precisely that there is no definite limit or bond.

The reader of this study will also find that there is a recurrent oscillation between several levels of reflection. The study is not intended to be “empirical” in the sense of being based on studies undertaken by myself or my research institutions. I have thus mostly relied on other material from empirical studies undertaken by other scholars although some references may be taken directly from media material not cited elsewhere. My intention is rather to submit this material to analysis, both on an “empirical” level and on a “meta-theoretical” level. A reader accustomed to a
rigid separation between philosophical approaches and empirical theory will be dissatisfied. It is not rare to find in social science a demarcation line to philosophy – which is, as it were, given over to other discussions, with or without some note of distance or even rejection of “hair-splitting” conceptual exercises. I have taken the opposite attitude in this study.

The framework of the study is thus philosophical – and, though most of its material concerns other issues than “pure philosophy”, and I make few claims to present new philosophical results, (this is a philosophical dispute as such: could philosophy present new results, and what do such results look like?), I wish to revert to, and follow up with a certain obstinacy, reflections of a philosophical nature. In some parts these remarks will fall into the subsection of “political philosophy” in other parts logic, linguistic philosophy, philosophy of mind, culture etc. I do not – as most philosophers should not! - pay too much attention to these divisions.

Technical details

One consequence of this approach is the fashioning of quotation-marks: I try to follow the technical custom of some philosophical texts, reserving the quotation-marks “ ” both for quotations of texts (shorter cuts), for unusual terms and for use of terms in a sense somewhat different sense from the one I regard as customary or accepted (by myself). A zest of irony in this use might be intended. The single quotation mark (apostrophe) ‘ ’ I have reserved for suppositio materialis in the medieval logician’s sense – that is when reference is made to the word itself (or sometimes its sense – the use of language is not stable here!). ‘Rooster’ has 7 letters, but rooster is an animal…

My use of footnotes might seem exaggerated – but it is part of the effort to turn many stones upside down and to let reflections flow also in side-directions. It is also, in more modern terms, an effort to use at least two levels of hypertext more extensively than usual. I would have liked to furnish more hyper-links, actually, indicating several possible streams of reflections under the main flow of reasoning. Ideally, a study like this should present several perspectives, conflicting and competing, in order to respond to the ideal of pluralism underlying both my philosophical and political ambition. This should in no way be understood as an ambition of “neutrality”.
Part I – the complications of the study of cultural production

Culture, politics and cultural policies: $\int$ or $\Delta$?

$\int$

Plato$^1$ had a distinct idea about cultural policies – 2400 years before the notion was invented. He thought that the principal role of cultural production was to strengthen the state and integrate poets, philosophers, priests and philosophers into the services of this state, a state ruled by the best of men (aristoi).

$\Delta$

Aristotle also had a distinct idea about the role of culture, though in some respects the opposite one. His view about the state was founded upon his experience of the city (polis, the place of the many) or the market place: a meeting-place for different people, each bringing in his contribution, which could be exchanged for the products and services of others. His political philosophy is taken as the basis of contemporary “communitarianism”, that is the view of society as a “federation” of diverse communities, which neither want to nor are supposed to “integrate” into a whole, though they are still capable of establishing peaceful conditions in “differentiation”.

The human condition: media, sharing, communication

INTERVENTION

Media, mass media and person-to-person media, intervene between people. That is, people in what we rather innocently among the affluent classes of the world today call “developed” societies or layers of societies – differently from yesterday, communicate by something, machines, material things like paper, electronic waves, instruments, for the most part of their lives. They do not just talk face to face with the majority of people, which they know and see.

This goes for communication in the sense of exchanging some kind of messages. Do not forget, however, that communication basically, or at least etymologically, is sharing in a community, that is, not being moved from one place to another. Also, referring to the other major use of the term communication, that is, going from one place to another, we implicitly accept that the ultimate aim of transport also is “being-together” of people, or of goods. The lines of transport connect, thus establishing a community over time and space. Also transport, moving objects (including persons), is basically different today by using means of transport, other means than our hands or feet.

Paradoxically: although we say that we live in an era of mobility$^2$ we never have, as physical persons, been so immobile… obesity being the fruit of this reluctance of moving our bodies. This paradox should also invite us to reflect upon the communication of messages – perhaps in a somewhat misanthropic way: do we really communicate more today than before, as the talk about “information (communication) society” seems to indicate? Just because we use machines to reach more people at a distance than before? Perhaps we do, but it is difficult to confirm: some say that

---

$^1$ Politeia, Book II 37b and IX 595 a.

people did not speak as much before, not even to their closest families and friends. How do we know? Some say (for example John Urry) that life today, as a whole, is more “complex” than before – this may be taken to be a generalisation of which communication could be a special case. Obviously, also difficult to gauge, but perhaps not impossible, as the wealth of research into measures of transitions from economies of manufacturing, over service societies to “experience economies” demonstrate. The classification of occupations, of economic activities etc. gives some concrete material in this context.

In both understandings of the word communication, however, the cardinal novelty seems to be: the intermediary phase of communication, the intercedent phase, has taken over, at least in terms of measuring the time consumption of a human being of the “developed” world. Figures like “each US-American child spends (what is “spending” – turn on a TV set in the morning and switching it off in the evening, or watching?) 5 –hours a day in front of a TV set” obviously testify to this change of communication patterns in the (still rather small) part of the world where machines are available to everyone at any time. So, yes, media has taken over much of our time in this fraction of the world…

That does not mean that other, “unmediated” communication has disappeared. We still do touch each other, make love, caress, kiss, scold, converse, hit, kill, cure, spit, make things, work silently, look, smell and other things that do not require any medium or any thing between me and those with whom I communicate, mingle or intertwine. Some indicators seem actually to intimate a decrease of direct communication in affluent societies – for example the reduced number of children in each household, and the radically growing proportion of single-person households in modern big cities may be presumed to encompass a reduced level of direct communication in the everyday life. On the other hand longer working hours (notably in the US) and an increased level of “going out”, that is, to restaurants, pubs etc, might compensate for the other decrease.

But, one change is quite undisputable: we – and I speak about us, the majority of all human beings, live in some kind of urban or near-to urban societies, whether in the industrialized, post-industrial, or non-industrialized parts of our planet. This has deeply changed our ways of living together in the last hundred years. To a large degree this also affects the lives of those who live in rural societies or in those rare parts of the earth where what we call “modern” life has not altered our daily being-together. Even very poor or “underdeveloped” societies tend to be, directly or indirectly, deeply affected by the “modern” ways of living. The most obvious token of this affectedness is, precisely, the structure of mediated communication: even the most remote village in a poor society is reached by telephones and has at least a radio or television set somewhere.

Living together means thus today living with intermediaries in the form of instruments of communication, filling our days with media, or doing things accompanied by media use. All forms of expressions are doomed to take this fact into account – and in a wider sense: cultural production (see below for a discussion of this notion) is mediated production, one way or another.

This is a banality, but it merits to be repeated, since this radical change in the human condition sometimes is too close to be observed.

Governance

The human condition also refers to what governs us.

This is without prejudice to the necessary assumption, philosophically speaking, that we also govern ourselves: the ideas of will, of guilt, and/or responsibility, are ideas without which no description or explanation of human discourse is possible, from the simplest enunciation of a

---

3 It is a well established discourse in the far North, the topic of innumerable jokes, that people actually talked a lot less in earlier times.

4 In a lecture in Norrköping Sweden.
desire or some basic physical need, to scientific, literary or philosophical presentations. To govern ourselves means to resist or counterbalance the forces that are imposed on us: the 2500 years old, at least, discussion of human autonomy versus determination of our actions by external forces treats this issue – which, at least as far as a philosophical point of view is applied, should rather be considered an issue of which categories should be used to describe, analyse or explain the human condition, rather than empirical or statistical fact-finding. The idea of resistance to that which governs us is thus already included in the very understanding of the object of our study, human life, and specifically, human communication.

The Reign of Mind

Put in other terms, the human condition – as it is being changed by the intervention of machines – might also, paradoxically, be said to be a condition where Mind reigns, in a different way and much more pervasively than before, in human history.

Mind has always been the human tool: mind is in a sense identical with or synonymous with becoming human, over a period of millions or at least tens of thousands of years of prehistory. Mind has, in a very late period of its existence, let us say the last 3-5000 years, given us history. This has become possible precisely because of the development of “intercession” in communication: to use a device for sharing a message with someone, a device other than your voice or body in the immediate sensory presence of your interlocutor. Thus mind is not invented by history, but the invention of devices for preserving messages: writing, symbols, all kinds of artifacts, enduring for some time – enabled the super-artifact Language to extend over immediate communicative presence. And that is history, at least in the sense I learnt at school: history as the tale or the story about the past. History as the object (or you might also say, subject or topic) of this story is another issue – another object if you like. The Past is another word for that object – that is, the world looked at from the point of view of enduring objects or events: four-dimensional objects as such, and the World as the “Inbegriff” of those events, or the “horizon” of all objects. But that is another story. History in our first – primordial - sense might thus, I judge somewhat imperialistically, be said to be equivalent with mediated communication. History, though, might be extended to “prehistory”, since mediated communication is at hand already from the paintings in the grottoes about 33000 years ago…

Idealism

Now, the proclamations expressed above might, or might not, say something on our subject. But at this level of understanding, I venture to appeal to the benevolence of my readers to understand this proclamation as a proclamation of a new idealism. Idealism means, roughly, that the reign of thought, or the patterns of thought, “viewed” by our mind or our reason, are recognized as a force or a set of entities, independent of processes of production of material goods, indeed even sovereign to these processes. In its extreme forms idealism might even declare that “being is being in the mind” (being “caught by” the mind). This is going too far: I advocate ontological pluralism and tolerance. Being is best categorized under several different ultimate categories, that might or might not interact. Now, categorizing means to state which way is the best to speak in order to create order in our discourse. Philosophical prudence has taught us, since Kant, that in the treatment of philosophical problems, we should take care not to express views on what there is, independently of our discourse (or reason, or experience), when the case is really about how we order our experience, or the “content” of it. We might even say: the objects of our experience, since an object is precisely what is meant by any kind of human activity – mental, or not very mental.

\footnote{Without drowning in the philosophical (logical, epistemological, ontological) controversies of at least the last three and a half centuries.}

\footnote{As was suggested by Aristotle and treated in some detail by Franz Brentano in the 19th C.}
The idea in this book is to sketch a setting for our reflections that does not restrict the examinations performed to a sector of “media studies”, but rather includes such perspectives in a wider context that, ultimately, is a study of human discourse or discourses. In this sense this study intends to be a study of a “late modern” kind, or perhaps the opposite – quite old-fashioned – a “transcendental” kind, since it intends to be a study on how we understand the phenomena around us, the world, or the reality. It is not without ambitions to study a “reality” in an empirical sense, but it aims first of all at studying the conditions of understanding reality. This, naturally, also means that we study reality, simply because we bring an order into understanding it. “Nothing is as practical as a good theory.” These conditions are, by and large, in a society of the kind in which we are living, set by the structures, categories, discourses of communication, mostly of mediated communication.

Culture

Although media in a restricted sense, that is, mass media, interpersonal media, all kinds of message-carriers like publicity, sign-posts etc. may be taken to be the focus of examination of the present human conditions, the media in the basic sense applied above is a wider concept. Media would in a number of cases be identical to artifacts, that otherwise would normally be relegated to “culture”. Culture is a notoriously polysemic word – but in as far as we understand by it “the sphere of human symbolic communication”, studying the conditions of media in a narrow sense is studying a subset of culture. We shall return numerous times to these rather difficult issues of definition and linking different kinds of study of the human condition with each other.

The background to this study is, as stated in the preface, not the widest concept of culture, rather a rather narrow context: the effort of public authorities to tackle the intricate web of dependencies and political dilemmas facing present cultural policies of most states with a developed structure of mass media, in their role as agents in the political life. The empirical political examples and experiences derive in many cases from a small European country, but since European bodies have long been struggling with rather similar problems of media policy and cultural policy, treating them in their common organisations (EU, Council of Europe) a basis of common knowledge exists for a rather wide group of countries. Obviously, since most European media policies are – whether we like it or not - intimately linked to developments in North America, most deliberations on, and examinations of European media policies will necessarily include references to the United States. It is clear that analyses of cultural policies, media policies and, ultimately, what has been termed the “human condition” will be biased, or at least has to be accompanied by a kind of reflexive and critical awareness of the specificity of the selected group of countries serving as knowledge basis.

The presentation of this study aims at following a “hermeneutical” circle or rather spiral, in ascending from a first understanding and overview to more detailed, and hopefully more penetrating, reflections on the “same” issues or questions, ending up in rather concrete daily politics.
How to study culture: discipline and knowledge

Philosophical presuppositions

The introduction above has already marked that the idea of studying culture resides in a rather complex web of philosophical presuppositions, crossing frontiers between disciplines as well as landing in conflicts within and outside research.

“Philosophical” is here taken in its restricted sense: philosophy is thus taken “seriously”, not in the “American” loose meaning of any kind of personal or general view of anything. Philosophical is thus taken to be an effort of rationally ordering knowledge, and of relating knowledge to other parts of the human condition, one of several human (perhaps, also animal) relations to other things and objects.

This view of philosophy, and the role of philosophy, is contested, by philosophers and others. The borderline between philosophy and other rational efforts is far from clear. And in fact some of the most burning philosophical problems arise in the borderland between what is accepted as philosophy in the inherited (Platonic-Aristotelian?) sense and other analyses of the human condition and the universe. Social analysis, history of ideas, have in many great oeuvres during the past century invaded or competed with philosophy as a kind of frame-setting effort to understanding human culture. Indeed the study of culture and “symbolic forms” (Cassirer) or “discourse” (Foucault) – as an empirical study – has not seldom aspired to replace what might be termed “transcendental” philosophy in the sense indicated above, just as the study of the human mind in some empirical sense has aspired to establish a more “scientific” base for philosophy instead of the “speculative reasoning”, severely castigated. This was (and still is) a subject of a major controversy in philosophy, notably the philosophy of mind and philosophy of science.

Under the heading of the combat against “psychologism”, it was the platform for both the major currents in contemporary Western philosophy, viz. analytic philosophy and phenomenology.

Relations between human beings may be actions, activities; sometimes however rather “passive”, contemplative attitudes, understanding itself usually being taken as “passive” – though, in the terms of Edmund Husserl, a “passive synthesis”. The experience of understanding could indeed be an overwhelming and very happy experience (Erlebnis, a “lived” experience) – putting together pieces and bits to a whole; metaphors are abundant in this context. Nevertheless understanding is a rather different experience from acting in the more common specific sense in which acting is usually linked to some movement, at least of our mouth or hand...

“I see”, I have a “survey”, an “overview” – Überblick as it is well expressed in German - is a frequently used synonym in English, and some, but not too many, other European languages. Understanding is the basis of knowledge – even in the “objective” sense: someone must have understood every piece of what is considered knowledge by any group of people.

I do not pretend that rationality, understanding in this (narrow) sense (again, the Germans differentiate between Verstehen and Verständnis, which rather denotes sympathy…), is the only sphere of interest to philosophy, but it is central. Also actions, ethics, feelings, will, are, as objects of philosophical reflection, subject to the kind of ordering and aspiration of overview, which characterizes philosophy. But they are characterized by some ingredient added to that which Edmund Husserl called “intentionality” – which in itself might be conceived also as a rather “passive” mood of human situation, compared to “action”. I must, however, have some kind of ordering, categorizing, structuring (synthesizing) quality in my understanding, be it ever so “passive”, so the borderline is not sharp. So much for “philosophical”.

---

7 This has been termed the problem of “psychologism” in philosophy, cf. my work Content and Object and Martin Kusch.
Some conditions for research

This is not primarily a study of epistemology or philosophy of science. Nevertheless the conditions for research into, or within, the cultural production sphere – sectorial or non-sectorial – are linked to some general conditions for research. This might be realised simply by contemplating both the facts that research is (as is recognized by a number of researchers, such as Cassirer, Bourdieu and Foucault) itself a subspecies of cultural production, and that conditions for research depend, in a complex web of relations, on conditions for cultural production, and, finally, that these conditions intersect with conditions of understanding and ordering knowledge of all kinds of cultural production, or simply analysing it. Thus, failing to relate research into cultural production conditions with conditions of knowledge “as such” (überhaupt) will be naïve, by being narrow-sighted.

Knowledge – and notably scientific knowledge – is a socially organized structure or web of institutions, materials, persons, immaterial entities like ideas, theorems, logical rules, epistemical end ethical values and codes of conduct etc. The advancement of knowledge or scientific development is mostly regarded as a accumulative process allowing past achievements to be added to innovative successes, either by some rather “evolutionary” day-by-day diligent work or – as argued by Kuhn and others in the 1970-s – in its essentials by revolutionary jumps, changing the entire paradigm of a particular branch of science. A combination of the “normal science” and the “paradigm shifts” is seen as ordinary steps in a process viewed according to a model of biological development, where “natural selection” by the survival of the fittest (viz. normal science) has to be supplemented by “genetic jumps”, due to genetic mutations (viz. paradigm shifts). In science, these mutations are often ridiculed, just as in art, but sooner or later may demonstrate their viability.

This evolutionary model of the progress of knowledge involves some difficulties, since the shifts of paradigms are not predictable, and it is difficult to claim that science, just as the biological world, contains some kind of basic “adaptation to the environment” as a driving force. The entire process becomes as a whole erratic and difficult to combine with the requirement of order normally attributed to any kind of systematic research.

Imre Lakatos (for example in Lakatos 1970) suggested a kind of holistic view on scientific progress – it is the system of research programmes, which should be seen as a accumulative process, not the individual discoveries, theories or findings themselves. The “positivist” acceptance of verification or (in Karl Popper’s version, falsification) as a kind of wholesale method of establishing the adequacy of new theories in science is rejected as both logically untenable, naïve and historically incorrect. Indeed the very idea of confirming a theory as such as true or correct is put into doubt – and, it seems, replaced by more “pragmatic” criteria, which are then judged, in the final run, to be still a token of progress.

Pragmatism, phenomenology, positivism: epistemological chores

These discussions have a long history. Before the discussion originating in the Vienna circle of “logical positivism” around the 1920s, a discussion centred on the status of logic and mathematics was the subject of intense study and debate in philosophical circles with Gottlob Frege, the great constructor of formal symbolic logic, as a central figure (at least from the point of view of our present conception). Frege and Husserl fought against “psychologism” in logic and mathematics, that is, the idea that empirical research in the human cognitive process supplies answers to questions in the theory of foundations of logic and mathematics. As a kind of counter-movement, the ideas of “pragmatism” were however already present in discussions on knowledge
and science, namely, roughly, the idea that the adequacy (truth?) of theories has to be rooted in their use, utility or “workability” in actual life.\footnote{The notion of “workability”, rightly, associates pragmatism with Karl Marx and his historical materialism – where truth is also somehow anchored in material conditions, and human action – that is, another level of the human condition than “pure description”. Obviously also Karl Marx’ general slogan of the role of philosophy being to change the world, not merely studying it, might be regarded as a kind of pragmatism – indeed linked to his proposal of action as a primary analytic level. The two currents - one might rightly employ a Hegelian notion of “dialectical” here – are perhaps today less antagonistic than in the heydays of Frege and Husserl, since 1) Frege’s followers in logical theory of foundations of mathematics have emphasized the “constructionist” character of mathematical knowledge and theory, and 2) Husserl inspired a school of intuitionist logical theory where proof is judged to be a primary logical level before truth. Obviously both construction and proof are easily classified as categories of human action – that is, pragmatic categories.}

Husserl was inspired by William James, both psychologist\footnote{The Principles of Psychology, 1890} and philosopher, together with Charles Sanders Peirce father of pragmatism in the United States, still a stronghold of this very influential complex of views – more than ever so today. Husserl’s colleague and disciple in the phenomenological movement Max Scheler\footnote{Kuhn} wrote a long essay on pragmatism, condoning some of its tenets and rejecting other parts.

The theses put forward by Kuhn (and even more so Feyerabend) and Lakatos in the 1970s attach to pragmatist – and Marxist - ideas, but are also highly critical of the other trend criticised by Husserl, in the beginning of the 20th century – namely empiricism, notably in its “neo-positivist” version (the Vienna circle is also labelled “logical empiricism”, and, in its turn, strongly criticized psychology, as well…). Husserl’s proposal was to simply reject empiricism as a vicious circle, since logic is a condition of empirical science, not the reverse, irrespectively of whether the science concerned is psychology (as a science of the mind and thought processes) or sociology (as a science of human societies, including scientific research). He denounced all these ideas as “anthropologism”, leading to a relativism which, ultimately, gave no space for “theory as such”, that is, logically structured theorems and axioms covering a particular field of objects – which meant no less than a break-down of rational knowledge as such.

Now, these epistemological generalities concern the present subject of investigation in as far as we do not really have to despair of the particular difficulties of research on cultural production more than all other branches of research: the theses presented by Lakatos, Kuhn and Feyerabend (and all their followers, for example in the schools of “social constructionism”…) do concern the basic predicaments of knowledge as such. Cultural research, in the wide sense, shares the same glories and miseries, it seems, of physics, mathematics and biology. The ghosts of circularity are present in a more obvious way in research on the human condition (such as research on research…) but the very nucleus of rationality in the natural sciences, viz. logic and mathematics, are submitted to the same kinds of struggles on the rationality of their “foundations”\footnote{One of the controversial notions in the context is, precisely, “foundationalism” and a grave accusation expressed in these struggles has been “foundationalism” or even “fundamentalism”…}. Irrespectively of whether we accept, or reject (as I tend to do) radical pragmatist views on science (know-ledge), the justification of our undertaking shares a dependence on a large number of other circumstances than logical consistency with distinct spheres of cultural production. Whether we are in the service, as researchers, of King Charles II, James II or William of Orange or of a university, a research institute, a public or private institution, etc., our research has to be somehow accountable for its dependencies as much as for its results and proposals. I may argue that physics is different from philosophy, ethnology, media studies or mathematics in this respect, but it is more likely to be a question of degree than of species.
Disciplines

Discipline has to do with teaching. Someone teaches the other: the disciple. The disciple is submitted under the teacher, the powerful knower.

Discipline means also the domain of teaching – frontiers are drawn to other domains, neighbouring or distant. Trespassing frontiers is not always advisable – sanctions might be taken.

Discipline is however also required for those who want to learn: sacrifice, order and obedience.

But also, more generally, for anyone who is submitted to the control of someone else: discipline means submitted to a control over a set of life circumstances, sometimes a very strict control, for example in an army, a firm, (The Firm), a criminal gang or a prison. The extreme in human society is the control of the slave by his/her master, approaching the control of an animal by its owner. The image of the Panopticon, the “all-seeing device”, suggested by Michel Foucault’s investigation of crime and punishment, associates the ideas of punishment, control, management of people by other people to the idea of discipline. Ultimately, the complete submission under an omnipotent God constitutes the final point of the idea of discipline… The aim is often set as bliss in the eternal life – not happiness in this life…

So discipline is closely tied to the idea of restrictions, but also order and system – indeed the notion of a system might be regarded as the generalization into the non-human world of the idea of discipline. You cannot, even being a dead stone or a non-conscious plant “step out” of your place in the system. System and force are interrelated: forces determine the elements of a (dynamic) system… To talk about a force is just a way of describing the specific relations internal to a system. Of course some forces are destructive to systems, makes them collapse, differentiate, other forces are integrative, keep them together. The idea of evolution is obviously the Big Story of our time (to employ Lyotard’s much-cited expression) and might be regarded as one comprehensive or universal (system-characteristic) force. This model opens up for a glory, in terms of a kind of “progress” as an advancement of fit(ted)ness or adaptation to the environment, but also for a misery, since it requires most of its system-components to die and disappear. Someone has said that Darwin really had nothing to say about the Origin of Species, but a lot about the Death of Species – for the simple reason that he knew nothing about genetics or multidiscipline is also a central notion in the sphere of cultural production: most of us who are in the academic system perhaps tend to have a rather positive view of it, in several senses. Apart from the requirement to master your desires for laziness and an easy life it is also imperative, in the arts as well as in research, to “stay where you are”: in your field of knowledge, to listen to your teachers, not transgress borders without some kind of permission, or if so, just occasionally. The academic discipline where you are situated is a structure or system which benefits from an infrastructure already established (texts, laboratories, practices), serving the needs of the new users, allowing them to extend knowledge – to “advance” as we often say, using a spatial unidimensional metaphor – going in one direction. We identify ourselves with a discipline, we are philosophers, mathematicians, anthropologists, physicists etc.

Still, a superficial look at the history of research, knowledge and science (Wissenschaft/learning/nauka) should, precisely, teach us that this is a rather childish attitude. The life of science presupposes precisely to allow new buds to blossom, new branches to grow, old branches to die or pass to other fields of human interest (astrology or alchemy) – hierarchies to fall down. For two banal examples: who would say that theology is the ultimate goal of all research training?, Philosophy enjoys a very different prestige in different societies, just compare its status in France and in Sweden!

Breaking up disciplinary identifications is sometimes hard – on the individual level (“I am not a philosopher any longer, but”….) as well as the collective one (“the standards of good empirical media research do not allow philosophical excursions of that kind”…). In the arts
technological progress (sic!) has perhaps however promoted a breakdown of borderlines – and in
some scholarly contexts credit is also given for breaking lines and disciplines.

New disciplines of research are of course just like new churches or religions eager to estab-
lish themselves, by erecting their monuments, rituals, frontiers, institutions, leaders, honours etc.

In the field of studies of cultural production media research has just passed the frontier
from being an interdisciplinary kind of research, open to a lot of aspects and disciplines, to a dis-
cipline in its own right – “media studies” have become Media and Communication
Research/Science. The opposite is perhaps still the case with “cultural studies” – where a multi-
tude of disciplines – philosophy, ethnology/-graphy, anthropology, sociology, political science,
history and theory of the arts, history, linguistics – you name it, have all been given a place in a
new subject of study, aiming at finding new knowledge about the very nebulous object named
“culture”. And, basically, still nobody cares as to within what discipline you are working – but the
difficulties in breaking up identities of discipline are illuminated by the history of the Grand Mas-
ter of cultural studies, Michel Foucault. Foucault in vain tried to present his thesis on the history
of madness to a renowned and supposedly tolerant professor of the discipline of History of
Ideas at Uppsala University in the 1950s. After some initial difficulties also in France his work
was widely celebrated and accepted as a doctoral thesis at Sorbonne.

**Conflicts**

Cultural production is, like drama, a field of battles, conflicts. Not exclusively but mostly. The
object of cultural production, generally speaking, is problems. Something that we do not under-
stand, something which catches our attention, because it is difficult to solve. Science tries to
answer questions, art to find new ways of demonstrating tensions and conflict (evidently also
harmony…I concede), justice is about settling problems, reactions to crimes, regulating possible
conflicts of interest, media informs us, mostly, about conflicts, “breaking the news” is set as a
drama. Research is about “attacking” problems, answering questions, but research itself is part of
a social web, not outside it – albeit it should, also, act as if it were…

Research into cultural production is part of the same production. And this production is
through and through conflict-ridden, in some of the ways indicated. Some of the conflicts are in-
ternal, within scientific research itself: on methods (in social science, “qualitative” vs.
“quantitative” approaches, just for an example), or rather external, such as on ideological, phi-
losophical, or political loyalties, on dependencies of sponsors, personal relationships, academic
promotion strives, salaries, and so on. Some of these conflicts are generally admitted, openly
treated and declared. Others are hidden in a number of ways, “objectivised” as disputes over
quality of results, methods and relevance. Some of these conflicts, whether open ones or just
conflicts of interest showing themselves in a more indirect manner, will be treated below. They
reflect a characteristic situation of research on cultural production (which I take in about the
same sense as Bourdieu, see below): researcher and research objects are “entangled” in a way that
does not apply to research on “natural” objects, also taking into account what has been said
above.

A cultural object is an object in a more etymologically adequate way than a natural thing,
“standing against” (Gegen-stand in German) or “thrown out against” (objecio, objectum) us: both
expressions indicate a fundamental dependence of the object on a mental act, which the idea of a
physical or natural object is not taken to suggest, at least to the common sense. Artifacts are in
this sense master-examples of objects, since they are “artificially” made (by us). The Polish phi-
losopher Twardowski (1911), as described below, sketched a whole field of research into objects
that exist “thanks to” (that is, dependent on) some human mental activity (“psycho-physical
products”) – which is not generally assumed to be the case with physical/natural objects (things).
The study of cultural production

Cultural production might be understood in several ways: one is the production of cultural objects, another might be a particularly “cultural” kind of production process. A third way of understanding is the particular conditions of production of cultural objects – disregarding whether these conditions are “cultural” in any narrow sense of this word, as distinguished from economic, material, social etc. It is the third way of understanding, which is in the focus of this study. The study of cultural objects has a long history in the traditional disciplines of the “humanities” – such as history, analysis and theory of the arts, of literature etc.

To determine, and delimit, the study of cultural production it appears necessary to define the object of our study, viz. cultural production. In doing so we are, however, thrown into a century-old antagonistic philosophical, semantic/terminological, ideological and scientific dispute. One of the focal beginnings of this dispute is evidently the historical dispute between Hegel and Marx, and the famous doctrine(s) of base and superstructure proposed by Marx and Engels as a fundament to the theory of dialectical (historical) materialism. A serious difficulty in the discussion after Marx-Engels is the diversity of interpretations, and the diversity of views attributed to Marx, based on his own texts and to the divergences found between him and Engels precisely on the links or dependance between base and superstructure.

One way of dealing with this dispute is to, in some basic respects, ignore it: taking simply for granted that the spectrum of human production has two poles, one of which is called material, the other cultural (geistlich) and letting the borderline, or demarcation line, remain unsettled, that is, mobile – adapting to diverse practical/theoretical requirements and research models. We shall, in the course of this study, encounter several diverse proposals on how to distinguish between forms of production, and what to include in the two spheres. Just as the notion of culture is rather fluid (cf. below) the notion of cultural production will present the same complications.

The classical problem for Marx was (or should have been) the definition of technology – for a major part knowledge of how to produce material goods. Since technology is intimately linked to knowledge of the more clear-cut kind, in science and other scholarly occupations, it presents itself as a “Grenzgänger” determining the very epoch-setting concepts of Marxian theory of history. For what is capitalism, if not completely determined by forms of production linked to industrial technology? Even if Marx did not suggest that socialism or communism in themselves are marked by new technologies of production, this problem remains difficult to solve in a strict dichotomy between material and immaterial (cultural?) production. Cultural production has its own conditions of production, in many respects different from the conditions of producing physical objects, “material” production, in whatever way this is distinguished from cultural production. But a lot of the conditions of cultural production resemble or might be identified with those of material production. Collective organisations, infrastructure, decision-making, power relations might be mentioned as such fields.

The policy and politics of cultural production

“Cultural policy” is an expression that only in the last decades has won general acceptance in democratic societies, notably in English-speaking countries. One essential factor behind this late approval was the dreadful examples of cultural or propaganda policies of totalitarian régimes.

“Policy” is a word with a wide scope of meanings, from insurance policy to any singular set of actions or intentions designed to meet a particular need or wish of someone, individual or group. The roots of the word are well known: the poly- prefix, referring to “many”, or the Greek word for “city”, the birth-place of democracy. Primarily policy should be, for its historical roots,
something relating to what a plurality or multitude of people think or do, or at least the organization of practices, norms and public behaviour of a collective of persons. And cultural policy should thus be what a multitude of people, primarily organized in a kind of collective society, intend to do, or usually do, as far as culture, in one of its diverse senses, is concerned.

A trivial linguistic distinction is worth pointing out: The adjective “cultural” carries, in these contexts, an “objective” sense – referring to the policies for some field of objects, not referring to the particular quality of that kind of policy. “Cultural policy” is not necessarily more “cultural” than defence policy or social policy. Due to the value-laden connotations of high prestige of the word “culture” this distinction is not always observed in the public debate.

Actually this kind of double meaning invades and complicates discussions – albeit in an interesting manner, as emerges from one of the really pioneering works in contemporary cultural (!) research, viz. that of Pierre Bourdieu. He makes a fundamental distinction relating to the above-mentioned one between objective and qualifying use of the notion. In distinguishing between cultural policy and the “politics of culture” Bourdieu links the qualifying (prestige-laden) use of “cultural” – notably in the French-speaking world to the stratification (or class-separation) to which the cultural policies in a narrow sense contributes – the “distinction” between the culturally rich and culturally poor. “Politics” might have a rather straight-forward negative connotation to an English speaker might do – perhaps linking politics with a rather untrustworthy kind of corruptive practices.

Bourdieu’s observation is crucial to all contemporary study of cultural policies – and the politics of culture – and the apparent paradox (dear to the French intellectual discourse) in his formulation syntheses the agenda for most of contemporary (cultural!) debates and research on cultural production and its governance. I would also suggest, as a corollary, that his observation is crucial to cultural policies and the politics of culture themselves, not only the study of them.

Studying cultural policies in a scholarly manner might thus be done in various perspectives.

Research for various societal objectives or for the benefit of advancement of some or other political goal is commissioned on a regular basis. This is what in some contexts is referred to as “sectorial” research: that is, research integrated into a process of political decision-making. This is not synonymous with technical or “applied” research, it could be part of a “basic” research effort or “applied” research (or technology). Classical areas for “applied” research, apart from the environmental area, are industrial and military research. Theology might perhaps be regarded as containing the oldest kind of applied research, notably in a sector which is classified as cultural by

---

12 Swedish, my mother tongue, just as German, do not have difficulties in marking the distinction between the two uses of the adjective here: “Kulturpolitik” is not necessarily “eine kulturelle Politik”… - this is evident from the “pioneering” kinds of cultural policies in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany.

13 La distinction

14 Cf the definition in Oxford Dictionary.

15 Among the signs of this new awareness one might just refer to Unesco’s recently adopted Convention on cultural diversity, and the ambitious networks of web sites resumed by Unesco, as well as the European efforts to establish a “laboratory” of cultural policy research, and, finally the mushrooming of “observatories” in a multitude of countries.
both scholars\textsuperscript{16} and in other contexts...And today economy might host a number of such aspects – institutes of economic forecasting are probably as numerous as universities for training priests in earlier times in Europe.

Research on cultural production, and the policy processes involved therein, is clearly an interest of public authorities, responsible for promoting the arts, cultural heritage - and the media. But it is also related to more central issues in the public sphere, such as promoting the dynamics of democratic institutions and of popular participation. The mass media sector is customarily attributed a central role in the very functions of democratic governance. This is frequently manifest in the numerous constitutional texts that protect the rights of the press and other media in most democratic countries. But also the discourse of undemocratic countries normally pays lip-service to the importance of the media, though some device is then used to invalidate formal regulations on freedom of expression etc. International organisations - representing a growth of public normativity in what seems to be an irresistible process - also include formulae laying down cultural freedom as cornerstones to the progress of mankind. Despite the weakness and patent inefficiency in the actions of international organisations this “ideal” progress should not be underestimated – as pointed out in various studies of Unesco and other intergovernmental bodies, notably in the context of preparing conferences or events devoted to cultural policies.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{The researcher’s consciousness, dilemma, “reflexivity” and “the Piper’s principle”}

Why bother about the kind of research we are financing or researchers are pursuing? Sectorial or non-sectorial, does it matter?

One seemingly reasonable answer may sound slightly cynical: “He who pays the piper calls the tune” (sometimes I think people use fiddlers instead of pipers for this proverb).\textsuperscript{18}

It is no coincidence that the kind of production referred to in this saying is cultural production. The sense of the saying is to remind cultural workers of the fact that they are under about the same kind of constraints as other workers, or producers. We know the role of the buffoon: to be wise and dumb, to please and to tease the lord and master. Scientists and other true-sayers – and in fact every worker in the Reign of Mind - like to think that they are entirely free; this is a discourse surrounding a lot of scholarship, but its credibility may, historically speaking, be gravely doubted. The freedom of scholars, just like every cultural producer, reflects the degree of freedom of society as a whole, in a given historical and social context. That does not say, however, that we should surrender to a crude, whole-sale determinism (sometimes attributed to Marx and Engels) to the effect that the “superstructure” of cultural production “reflects” the “basis” of material production in a simple unidirectional manner.

Actually, the crucial point is to see how this “reflection” is formed, and to what degree – concretely we may ask if at all any sense could be made of the idea that the production of wheat, cotton cloth or tobacco, or spacecraft, is “reflected by” or determines scholastic philosophy, liberal ethics or utilitarianism, post-modernism or quantum mechanics respectively – just to pick some examples from historical epochs judged to have distinct systems of material production.

On the other hand, it is ridiculous to deny that there is influence from those who pay and organize cultural production on those who are employed to implement it, whether they be artists, scientists, lawyers, philosophers, clergymen or journalists....

The interplay between the individual role (including her own decisions, will and desires) and the social context (Zusammenhang) is precisely the object (subject) of study of important parts of social and cultural research itself (the problem of reflexivity!). One might express this condition as a “need to keep in mind its own precondition”. The individual is there, with her own will,
desires and interests – as a necessary category for human sciences, including the study of discourses – and the surrounding (context) or environment does not reduce the individual to nil. The surrounding, on the other hand, is not the mere sum or product of individuals, their actions, desires, interests etc – it makes no sense trying to “reduce” sociology or ethnology to the study of individuals, or psychology. Groups, institutions, societies, customs, discourses are quite as worthy and adequate objects (subjects) of study as individuals, things, magnetic fields, as well as non-things like mathematical structures, musical works, laws, logical proofs...

One might even formulate a doctrine of “ontological tolerance” on the basis of a study of human scholarship (actually a doctrine quite in conformity with Kantian “transcendental idealism”, stating that the conditions of experience are for the experience but not empirically deducible from it) as follows:

The categories of being for human cognition should be laid down in acceptance of the fact that many kinds of study could not be deduced or collapsed in another kind of study.

This principle, trivial as it may sound, is – paradoxically – a partial revival of a principle of disciplines, since it accepts borderlines in scholarly work. Actually it says, at least as a heuristic or working principle, that a discipline of study should be “left in peace” with the categories of objects it has as its subjects: whether quanta, tensor calculus equations, triangles, irreal numbers, sets of sets, institutions, customs, laws, family relations, intentions, experiences, historical epochs and contexts, linguistic categories and structures, sounds, scores, literary figures, artistic icons, taxonomic systems for plants and animals, nervous tissue, geological formations, chemical collusions……. Of course this is not a stable categorisation of objects: sometimes ontological categories do collapse: angels, ghosts, and even gods, seem to have done so, though everyone does not agree. And, of course, it is not an absolute principle – its essence is a warning against reductionism, not a declaration that there is not any justification in trying to build a comprehensive knowledge across borders of discipline. For those who like “dialectics”, it might be enounced as a counterpart, or antithesis, to the profession to interdisciplinarity made above. May thousand flowers blossom!

So much for reduction of interests and cultural products to material conditions.

Relativity of dependence

But what is the relation of this principle of ontological tolerance to the “Piper’s principle”, at a closer look? - Well, as often a revisionist relation: the dependence of the piper on his master (payer) is not absolute, but relative. The piper, just as the buffoon, in order to be paid has to tease, that is, produce something not already known. Often, simply, new knowledge, whether of the Daily-News-kind or of Quantum mechanics or copyright law complexities kinds.

Researchers on cultural production, as for example mass media researchers, are often paid by cultural producers themselves, by newspaper or media conglomerate trust funds, donation professorships, sabbatical leaves etc. Obviously the desire of a researcher to be awarded some time just for her own, sitting down or lying down to reflect, write, is a vigorous driving force in searching for funds, from all kinds of sources, whether media tycoons, military industry complexes or big corporations in computer business, pharmaceuticals etc.

Again, this does not mean that the researcher is exactly like the piper of the proverb – albeit perhaps in some respect: the researcher has to formulate her research programmes or projects in a way that suits the general intentions of the sponsor. Usually the sponsor has some kind of professional advice for deciding which projects should be supported, and in this way the general principle of “peer review” is also observed in these contexts. Obviously, however, the

---

19 Much of this position could be identified with the position of the German Neo-Kantian and/or phenomenologist Nicolai Hartmann. I am indebted to Prof Roberto Poli of the University of Trento to have presented Hartmann’s position and its possibilities during a series of conferences in Bolzano (the Bolzano International School of Cognitive Analysis).
particular foundation or financial source chooses the professional advisors who are known both as experts in their fields and as in some general manner not too distant in their general attitudes from that of the sponsor concerned. This goes for the public sources as well as for private – and of course no absolute guarantee is available that the advisors do not take undue regards in submitting their decisions and recommendations. Research juries or referees are from this point of view in the same predicament as all other decision-makers in society, and in particular in cultural production. Perhaps cultural production is a more delicate field of decision, however, since quite a lot of the projects involved are linked to some position involving taste, values, philosophical or ideological orientations. In its turn, again, this is part of the very reflexivity of cultural production their preconditon... Nevertheless, examples of a similar kind could also be found in most other research undertakings of a “sectorial” nature, in fields as energy, transport, environment, where political divergences abound.

Often it is argued that the best protection for the independence of research is the plurality of funding institutions – a mirror, or a specific case, of the debate on the pluralism of cultural production as a prerequisite for the satisfactory function of the system as such, and ultimately of democracy itself. However, just as in the case of mass media or art, to choose two fields of cultural production that are frequently discussed, the pluralism of centres of finances (or production) itself is not a guarantee for a pluralism in “content” (a notion that will be discussed at length in this study). A risk of uniformisation exists independently of the plurality of production or financing sources: just think of market mechanisms in television production that inevitably favour one or just a few kinds, or tastes, of production content. Also, trends of taste or fashion in art production tend to uniformise selections of projects.

As will be developed later, the type of production unit, individual producer, and in particular the openness to external monitoring and transparency – or, in somewhat economistic terms, accountability - are indispensable prerequisites to a genuine pluralism of content. Both private and public decision-making could be deficient in this respect – the difference is that in the private sector no general claim for “democratic” decision-making could be upheld, but in the public sector this is a crucial requirement.

Social and cultural research

Research into social contexts or culture must, following what has been said above, be open to the fact that the funding of research in these fields is tied to some kind of political interest which might not be openly declared – indeed often the contrary! Since several decades media industries have tended to adopt labels of being politically independent – although the political affiliation of most media business is rather clearly anchored in the right-of-the-centre part of the political spectrum.

And from this affiliation one would reasonably expect some association of media funds for research to be principally directed towards the same wing of the political spectrum. This does not mean that researchers enjoying support from these (private) funds must be bad or making unjustified compromises with their scientific sincerity or methodological principles – but it might entail that the choice of problems and subjects to be supported is favouring one kind of direction and not the other. On the other side of the political spectrum research foundations originating in, for example, the labour or green movements are rare, and mostly rather poor, if at all existent....

In a number of cases also this presence of private research funds also influence public research funding, simply by way of its marginal, albeit pivotal, impact. Those who aspire at financing their research from private funds would rather tend to adopt a research profile, which is not too controversial from the point of view of those sponsors. The research profile so chosen will in most cases not be changed for applications from funds available through public sources – which constitute a vast majority of all research funds in Europe. Furthermore any referee attached to a private foundation will be familiar with the profiles of applicants, also including projects financed from other sources.
It is difficult to see how this predicament could be changed in a way other than the differentiation of research resources which does not give too much weight to the private funding from individual sources.

One way of avoiding this is the general application of “arms-length principles” in the funding of cultural production. This might be realized by “pooling” private resources, in a manner similar to the kind of pooling in which some industrial research is organized, in order to preserve competitive “neutrality” in research funded by common sources. In this way the private character of the resources submitted is preserved, but decision-making “neutralized”, since the same experts decide about funds coming from diverse sources. 20

Conflicts surrounding funding of research might therefore in fact paralyse research into socially sensitive areas, and, furthermore, reduce the range of critical research programmes. That this situation does not, as a whole, prevail in the research community is, however, not very surprising, taking into account the structural predicament which still governs most research on culture and society. As a whole, this sphere of research is upheld in its critical function, I would argue, as a consequence of a much older tradition of research than the more recent external research funding system. That is, the tradition of academic tenure, and the independence linked to this stability of positions (sometimes too high a stability!) – an independence which is ultimately linked to the public, (also in the sense of transparent), nature of university and research institutions. The more recent system of external (private and public) funding of research has an apparent flair of independence, since applications for grants are normally examined by the academic community, itself engaged as counsel to the funding institutions. In reality this may be rather doubtful, since the groups and coteries of research funding institutions might be as strong as the old professorial dictatorships in universities.

What looks like a higher freedom for research might thus actually turn out to be a kind of risk venture, seeing it from the point of view of the independence and critical function of research…

**Sector and discipline**

Now, sectorial research is, to borrow a figure from classical rhetorics, in a “chiastic” way related to disciplines. χ is the Greek letter which has become a symbol for a rhetoric figure that expresses a cross-over relationship in an expression. One frequently cited example is:

*Non ut edam vivo, sed ut vivam edo*

I do not live in order to eat, but eat in order to live.

Sector means something that has been “cut out of” a whole (a pair of secateurs used in gardens): the normal geometrical illustration is of a “cake”, circular in form, divided into small sections, or sectors – a sector does however not always associate to the “circular” image, a triangle could be divided into sectors, for example. Now, sector in the sense which interests us here, is a social division: in most studies, administrative practices and political contexts one has to concentrate on one area, excluding others (cutting out them). As a social di-

---

20 This approach was suggested by a State expert on sectorial media research in 1994, in Sweden (SOU 1994:146). The suggestion encountered resistance, however, from diverse sides – one of them being the public radio and television company (funding quite considerable research programmes), but also from some parts of the research community, probably anxious to preserve separate identities of some of their research sources. The public broadcasting company resisted obviously giving up control over the resources set aside for research in the interest of the company itself.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the funds from the (statutory licence rate financed) public broadcasting companies in the share defined as the state share of the contributions to the pool of research funds provoked those companies - keen on their profiles as independent production companies, free from a political sphere.

This experience paralysed the discussion on the funding of sectorial media research – the cited study was finally filed in the archives after eight years (Jan 15, 2002), without any measure having been taken.

21 The etymology is from the Latin *seque* to cut, and other derivations are “sexus”, that (viz. species or genera of living organisms) which is divided or cut into parts – normally two parts, that is, dichotomic divisions, but other divisions are also permitted as in Linné’s sexual system of plants.
vision it is related to all current discussions about “social construction”, 22 “deconstruction”, “contingency”, conventionalism-in-classification etc.

Obviously there is some arbitrariness in the divisions which human beings make of their world(s). The discussion of “natural kinds” has been going on since Aristotle, and logico-philosophical struggles about the existence of universals has constituted a parallel to this dispute. Michel Foucault has excelled in showing the differences in taxonomic or other kinds of divisions in social and physical contexts. 23 On the other hand, everybody who undertakes a study, or engages in social practice, in administration and political procedures, has to accept the trivial necessity of division of labour. And all organisation is about dividing labour, in a rational, cost-effective and efficient manner – or a manner which satisfies the desires or plans set up by those who organise. A choice of subjects, of attention, is necessary. But nobody who is engaged in organisational work, be it military, business, or scientific, is probably ready to accept a radical conventionalism or constructionism of the kind which is attributed to a lot of contemporary social theory. Most, if not all, “practitioners” would simply assert that the field (sector) or area in which they work is really, not by sheer conventional choice, held together by some set of relations. This is the same as insisting that there is a rational ground for making this and not another division.

A sector is thus, I would propose, not something entirely arbitrary, but something tied to our whole understanding of the world around us – an understanding that is not subject to the choice of individuals, but to a collective rationality, just as using a language or a model of calculation is not an individual choice but has to fit an already existing discourse (code) or way of expression, at least in its basic features. One might also use, again, the crucial expression of “culture” here, since modes of expression, understatements, presuppositions, semiotic complexities etc. are all part of what is included in most understandings of this crucial notion. The subdivision of our world (our “life-world”, to anticipate our discussion of Habermas and his sources of inspiration) in distinct sectors thus parallels the idea of “categories” and “kinds”. Talking about culture as a sector, industry as a sector, environment as still another sector, thus presupposes that we have categorized our world in some way – directing our attention to only some parts 24 (constituents, aspects…) of the world, not all of it.

Sector in the “objective” sense presented here – as something referring to the objects of study or action, not to the actor or the subject studying something – is therefore closely related to the academic notion of discipline analysed above in a “chiastic” way, since a discipline is something that deliberately cuts over several sectors: history as a scholarly discipline does not stop at border-lines between culture, economy, politics, or any subsections of these “sectors”. Neither does philosophy, mathematics or geology.

So in order to study a sector properly, you simply have to cross-disciplinary borders. As has been discussed, this is sometimes a risky undertaking, since the liberty of academic research consists partly in disciplines, since nobody from “outside” – not even from the sector itself - should order the scholarly community to organise research in a particular manner. But obviously, the research community has to be funded, at least partly in consequence of sectorial considerations: that is, administrative, commercial, political, technical considerations.

A kind of repulsion and attraction is necessary, it seems, to reconcile those two forces – in academic contexts one translates this contrariety in terms of “interdisciplinary” research, which is often “oriented, or problem-oriented” research, “societally relevant” research, or, sometimes sectorial (sectorial) research. The last qualification relates commonly closer to uses and demands

22 Hacking
23 Cf. the famous introduction to Les mots et les choses.
24 Again, talking about parts is not as simple as it may sound; actually there exists, since at least the Polish philosopher Twardowski as well as Edmund Husserl (in his third Logical Investigation) a complex theory on parts and wholes – mereology – a theory which was, at least in some aspects, formalized and axiomatized by Twardowski’s disciple the Polish logician Stanislaw Lesniewski. In fact the talk about sectors might actually have to be related or even derived from a more general discourse of parts (constituents).
from “outside” the research sector, whereas the other qualifications have a flair of being initiatives from “inside” the scholarly community.

The distinction is dynamic: media research is a classical example of a research that has become disciplinary, from being rather typically sectorial, and interdisciplinary. A sector has to be defined, delimited, or cut out, by some kind of interest or intentional action, and a discipline has to motivate itself in relation to objective, or objectual, contexts studied by this discipline, be they ever so broad as “culture” or “nature” or “artifacts” or “numbers” or “logical fields”.

**Sectorial research on cultural production**

Looking at the field of interest of this study, that is, cultural production, the same kind of epistemological or methodological circle as has been discussed above reappears. If cultural production is in some sense regarded as a sector, separated from other parts of society and if research is also included in this sector, as suggested by many scholars (Marx, Cassirer, Bourdieu), well, then we are studying “ourselves”, much in the spirit of the Pythian call to “know thyself”. If culture, on the other hand, is treated as an “aspect” of social life, or the life of human beings as such, the very notion of sectorial research on culture sounds a bit contradictory, or too general to be workable, since it seems difficult to make a demarcation between culture and other social phenomena. The notion of “aspects” amounts, in this case, to be a parallel to Marx’s and Engels’s distinction of base and superstructure, encompassing the same difficulties of singling out cultural aspects from for example technology, or aspects of “material” production. It might be regarded as some kind of escape exit, but it might also simply be an acknowledgement of the predicament of any scholarly work: the divisions and focus of attention are to some extent constraints imposed by the scholar. The important point, from a methodological perspective, would be to introduce some kind of “operational” criterion on culture: that is to say what is not culture in social life. This makes it clear, it seems, that an “anthropological” notion of culture is simply not workable if some kind of sectorial mode of discussion is sought for. This also entails that some kind of precriptive definition of culture, violating some already current uses, is necessary to find a working criterion. The nearest at hand are, I think, those offered by more recent interventions such as those by Cassirer and Bourdieu – albeit Bourdieu is far from consistent in his uses of the notion of culture, when he enumerates the social domains included. Actually his approach is – as a natural consequence of his own anthropological background – very close to the omnibus (to steal one of his own rather negatively loaded terms in On Television) notion, covering all social life.

So let us, for the purpose of this study, just stipulate a definition of the cultural sector as including the following areas of social life:

- the arts
- the media
- the legal and ethical systems of political life
- research and educational systems
- myths, philosophies and religion

**Excluded** from this stipulatively defined cultural sector are: sports, general customs and habits of for example sexual and family life, politeness, economic activities and structures as such, leisure occupations in general, technology, political systems, values and structures as such. It is important to have a certain stock of “excluded” social sectors at hand, for the simple reason that the relation between culture and other sectors of society must have two, at least, “places” (in logical terminology to-the-left-of is a “two-place” relation) in order to be subject to a meaningful description. In many cases this delimitation coincides with the spheres of responsibility given to ministries of education or/and culture or/and research.

The inclusion of science (in the broad sense including all scholarly disciplines in the natural, social and human sciences as well as mathematics, philosophy and logic) in this definition is a deliberate choice for several reasons. Philosophically speaking – following the tradition in the
philosophy of science inspired by the notion of “constitution” \(^\text{25}\) as a central concept, in separating the fields of “immediate experience” and reflective (constituted) knowledge (or knowledge as such) – scientific research should also be seen as one brand of “narration”, since its results always have to be told in some form or other, that is, produced as “tale”. Research itself, as a process, might be regarded from a number of points of view but its results always have to be told, that is, subject to the rules of discourse, in language, figures, or other kinds of systems of symbols or signs.

Including these fields in the field of cultural production does, however, not imply that all of them will be natural to include in a study on the political aspects of cultural production. In this study the focus will be on those parts of cultural production which have a shorter history of scholarly study in general – which means that scientific and religious aspects of cultural life will mostly be excluded and that education will just be touched upon rather in passing.

A word on norms and legal systems is motivated here.

In most anthropological studies – of other cultures – norms, values, myths and legal systems are included as crucial elements of study. In sociological and cultural studies of the Western world (my world) this is characteristically not the case: our legal systems are usually awarded a kind of independence and rationality which moves them out of the “cultural” sphere into more central fields of research and social occupations. They have a nimbus of objectivity and cohesion, supported by the more than 2000 years old tradition of Roman law, and following legal systems and explanations and practices.

It is useful to realize that this seemingly uncontroversial and awe-inspiring prestige has been contested by some important critics and theorists, one of them being Ernst Cassirer, and one other being the, nationally, very dominant philosopher of my own country, Axel Hägerström (1868-1939). Cassirer, whose work is gradually being more and more studied (for example by Foucault), spent some years in Sweden \(^\text{26}\) devoted a study to a criticism of Hägerström’s philosophy, on the subject of Hägerström’s attacks on “metaphysics”, and his other main subject, viz. the establishment of a radical emotivist theory in moral philosophy. One of the issues where both philosophers agree, however, is the classification or at least partial integration of legal systems and principles into the sphere of myth and religion. Hägerström is very sharp in his condemnation of all previous legal theory and systems, from the Romans and onwards, as “superstition”, rooted in primitive myths. Cassirer criticizes Hägerström\(^\text{27}\) for not drawing the consequences of his view, in still upholding some kind of universalist ambitions for his ethics. Cassirer, who is a follower of Kant, does not agree with Hägerström’s radical dismissal of ethical and other values as “meaningless” or irrational, but agrees in as fas as he is anxious to emphasise the cultural environment of jurisprudence and legal theory, following Kant’s view, however, that this is far from excluding values and the “practical” sphere from the field of rationality, as seems (though in a very obscure manner) to be the case for Hägerström.

On a “meta-level”, it is worth observing that Hägerström’s doctrines acquired a quite dominant influence in not only Swedish philosophical circles, but also impregnated much of Swedish traditions in legal theory and practice, as well as in administrative and economic life, through the education in social science, law and administration. Hägerström’s own views on law, jurisprudence, ethics and also some scientific issues in general have actually become part of the Swedish discourse or, precisely, culture, in a remarkably dominant way, stretching over a very long period of time, forming even language use and habits. This might be taken as a good argument in favour of Hägerström’s own view (thus of course transforming his thought into “superstition” in his own terminology!) and of course even more to Cassirer’s own philosophy of

\(^{25}\) In the understanding of Edmund Husserl and other phenomenological theorists of science.

\(^{26}\) Actually he died as a Swedish citizen, though in the United States.

\(^{27}\) In a chapter of his study entitled Law and Myth.
“symbolic forms”. Thus, the discussion between those two theorists supplies on two levels arguments for the relevance of including legal systems and norms, as well as scientific (philosophical) discourse – taking as an example a small-sized European country, with a (then) ethnical monoculture, and strongly monolithic religious, cultural and political traditions in general.

This being said, as an argument in favour of a wider notion of cultural production than the one applied in cultural policies in usual political-administrative discourse, the study of legal practices will occupy merely a rather minor part of our attention in this study.

Some central conceptual issues

I shall end this section on method and reflexivity by touching upon some central notions for the debates on cultural production, with specific regard to media structure.

Culture

A classical suggestion as to the ambiguity or polysemy of the word culture is presented by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952/63), whose wealth of definitions surpass most other preceding or later accounts.

Nearly all works on cultural policy and methodology of cultural studies28 contain some section where this notion is defined, or at least a suggestion of definition is attempted.

An alternative is to take recourse to a rather common way in discourse analysis29, regarding the term as an “empty signifier” – having a central position in one or several discourses but being defined precisely by this position, which liberates the user of the term from the task of suggesting a new and original definition.

Philosophically speaking, there is a classical division, or even dichotomy, between “nature” and “culture” – the latter term usually referring to what is “man-made” in general, and more specifically areas pertaining to the “mind” or “consciousness” – leaving, for example, technology or material production techniques (see above) as a borderland to culture, though clearly being included in what is man-made or artificial. The discussion on these matters and distinctions was lively during most of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th, notably in German philosophy, the then dominating centre for philosophical research (and science in general). Edmund Husserl, who, perhaps after Wilhelm Dilthey30, played a major role for the foundation of theories of the social and cultural sciences as well as the humanities of the past century, also presented a number of reflections on this issue, though only published after his death, some of it quite recently31. The monumental work on cultural philosophy and the theory of symbolic communication by the aforementioned Neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer32, whose works are being re-edited right now, was synthesized in a small volume33 by himself just before his death.

Husserl suggested an approach to treating the problem of distinction between “base” and “superstructure”, as well as “nature” and “culture” – in simply suggesting that the reflection on the scientific structure of the study of the natural as well as the cultural world be guided by the over-arching concept of “constitution”. Constitution is not synonymous with “construction”, the

---

28 Cf. for example Fornäs (1995), for a rather synthetic account of cultural theory.
30 whom he, initially, strongly criticized in ”Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” (1911) – but who deeply respected Husserl on his part, and whom, just before Dilthey’s death, Husserl met, later adopting much of his viewpoints for his own philosophical development.
32 Cassirer 1923
33 Cassirer 1992 (1944)
central notion of much of the current discussion on cultural and social research, but a more modest concept: it focusses on the “build-up” of our apprehension, of the world around us. In reflection we are dealing with the structure of our representations, perceptions, dreams etc. But we do not literally build them, since the subject of our reflection is an analysis of what is before us already, not something we are constructing. In subsequent reflection we note differentiations of categories, of disciplines, of entire faculties of research, sectors etc. In our reflection we also use various kinds of discourses, languages, instruments of analysis – that are in a sense “pre-given” to us. We do not construct these either. They might be perceived and described as “constraints” (borrowing a term from theoretical linguistics), and among those constraints a large field might be classified as “nature” or not “man-made”.

As in all current theoretical reflection on social and cultural research the discussion about the role of sex or gender might, since the pioneering work of Simone de Beauvoir (1949) on the Second Sex, contesting the natural, respectively advocating the social/cultural character of femininity, serve as a model for the more general discussion.

There is, in all research on research, a kind of circle, which is, probably, not vicious but inevitable – a circle which becomes even more difficult to deal with as one enters a more general theory of discourse, such as the one initiated by Michel Foucault. In these studies “reflexivity” becomes a burning issue, actually not very different from the debates on “psychologism” in logic, in which Husserl and his contemporaries took part around the turn of the last century (cf. above).

Production – product

‘Production’ – is sometimes synonymous with ‘work’ … But not always: we all know that there is useless or unproductive, or even harmful, work as well. The noun ‘work’ is also systematically ambiguous, between the sense of production and product. A product is in a number of ways related to work, by being defined as the result of an act, action or process of production. This leads to the next cluster of conceptual issues related to the notion of cultural production. Let me first focus on the second part of the expression: viz. on production.

Also in this context a precursor to current debates and research on the notion of artifacts and artificial production (cf. for example Dahlbom and Beckman) was the cited, rather unknown, Polish philosopher Kazimierz Twardowski. His essay from 1911 on “Actions and products” foresaw a whole new area of research, a theory of artefacts, of high relevance to what is today called “cognitive science”.

Twardowski suggests the replacement of ‘content’ with the notion of ‘product’. One of the motives to do so was to escape from the severe criticism, which the psychological notion of content had met from logicians like Frege and Husserl. In doing so, Twardowski took recourse to the less psychological notion of product. A product is in his definition anything that exists “thanks to” any action – be it a materially productive (“physical”) action of making something or an action of another kind, like crying or singing (performing) etc. The latter kind of products Twardowski called “psycho-physical”; they are more or less identical with artifacts as such. These products are not “in” my mind, but in some sense “external” or “socially accessible” – a special category of these products are signs.

34 that is, outside Poland and a restricted circle of philosophers interested in ontology and “Austrian” philosophy from the beginning of the 20th century.
35 His best known work, Vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen, 1894, was a work in “formal ontology”, one of the targets of Husserl’s criticism of psychologism.
36 Polish original: O czynnosciach i wyтворach. Cf Cavallin 2001 for a discussion of this essay.
37 The social and historical character of mental products, such as cultural products, artefacts, signs, but also ways of thinking, categories etc. has been underlined by many scholars, in our time perhaps most pregnantly by Foucault. It should be observed, however, that, precisely at Twardowski’s university in Polish Lvâw, a young medical student named Ludwik Fleck (1886-1961) worked on strikingly similar ideas, founding them on his research into the tests of epidemic diseases, such as syphilis. Fleck’s epistemological ideas were formulated in a short essay from 1935, in German, Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache, The Origin and Development of a Scientific Fact. Fleck must, spending most of his life in Lvâw, 1886-1941 and from 1914
Another development away from ‘content’ in a psychological sense was chosen by Husserl in his talk about “noema” as “the thing thought of” – a noema being distinct from the object thought of (referred to) but rather close to the “sense” or “meaning” of linguistic acts, that is something by which something is thought of as an object. I think of (look at, etc.) the lamp in front of me: I do it by having a certain concept or idea of a lamp, a concept that is not my individual internal mental property or matter, but established as s socially structured meaning. I know what a lamp “is good for”, that someone has made it for me, sold it etc. The distinction in semantics between sense and reference, at least since Frege’s *Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung* and Russell’s *On Denoting* (despite the fact that Russell actually rejects the idea of a separate “Sinn” or “meaning” and only retains “denotation” or “reference”) might be regarded as a special case of the more general distinction.

Products of one action should, in Twardowski’s view in the essay from 1911, be strictly distinguished from objects for the same action – which does not in any way prevent products from being objects for another action or act (physical, psycho-physical or mental). The language used might be disputed – for example it is not obvious that all actions have “objects”. Or that actions are “about” something, with the obvious and very important exception of linguistic actions, “speech acts”, although actions by definitions are taken to be “intentional”, to be distinguished from mere “behaviour”.

The notion of product is, however, helpful in developing a theory for cultural production – it is also helpful in escaping the kind of “ontological reductionism” referred to above. In so doing it meets the requirements of linking together much of cultural theory, some parts of linguistics, discourse theory, and theory of artifacts – theories that form the backbone of much contemporary research in cultural sociology, cultural studies, and related parts of political theory, economy and aesthetics.

On the other hand it is of a somewhat subtle but crucial interest to insist on a distinction elaborated by Twardowski, viz. that between the product of an “act/ion” and the object of the same act. Normally, one is tempted to reserve the term object for that towards which an act is directed (in semantics one often uses the terms ‘reference’ and ‘referent’). In cultural contexts the distinction serves to avoid confusions. The “creative” ingredient of a production does not involve the notion of object in its contemporary use – despite the tradition from the Middle Ages to talk about “objective being” as that kind of being which is, typically, characterized by works of art, since they exist “thanks to” the action of the artist. In contemporary - philosophical and colloquial – language, objects may be any kind of entities (existing and fictional) towards which any mental (or brain) activity is directed.

Now, a product is not that kind of entity, simply because it is “included” in the act itself. To write a piece of music is to do a thing with your computer or pencil, but not to turn to that piece: it does not exist yet. In writing a piece of music you might “think” of for example bird’s songs or battles or whatever – which become, in a sense, the “objects” of the kind of expression which your piece might be (e.g. if it is “programme music”), or rather “refer to”. In most cases, however, it would be senseless to talk about the object of a piece of music (“subject” or “topic” is more adequate, such as love etc.). For an image or a picture it is (with the exception of “abstract” or “fictional” pictures) more natural to use the term of object, denoting the thing or event in the world, which is “depicted”. The product of an act might be labelled, Twardowski notes, an “in-
ner” object of the act, not to be confused with the (if any) external object⁴⁰ of it. To sing a song is not to direct your attention (intention) towards that (immaterial) object which exists already, but it is to use that very object in the act itself, to “perform” it. Thus we have to do with a rather complex set of relationships between acts, products and objects. Of course, when the product has been produced, it is an object, which might be turned to in other acts, by other people (animals) etc.

Schopenhauer touches upon this tricky issue in his treatment of music in Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, Book 3 §52, but does not make all the necessary distinctions⁴¹. His topic is the “object of art” and in particular the “objectiv/is/ation” of the will in general, an issue which is not far from the medieval ontological discussions on the diverse categories of being, mentioned already. Every object of art (object in the pregnant sense of the medieval terminology⁴²) is dependent on the will in a more radical way than for example objects of perception.⁴³ Schopenhauer’s main point in this matter is that music should be treated as being in some sense “identical” with the objectivated will itself – being much more intimately integrated in the mind than other forms of objects of art. A building, also being an object of art (literally “constructed”) is an “indirect” objectivation of the will, by way of the “idea” (in a Platonic sense) depicted by the work, while music is an immediate objectivation (p.304), that is, not passing through the idea. Behind the rather romantic and somewhat elusive presentation of this subject⁴⁴ one perceives a kind of distinction at which we are aiming here, and spelled out by Twardowski. The product of an act is “immediate” (“inner”) in a sense not applicable to the object of the same act.

It is no coincidence that this kind of production is “cultural” in the pregnant and narrow sense, as a work of art. Just as in much later cultural theory we have, however, a kind of intersection between aesthetical, perceptual, ontological and social theory. Key terms in this intersectional study are both object and product(ion).

**Cultural production**

Svante Beckman⁴⁵ has looked into the notion of cultural work – a notion related but not identical with cultural production, in the sense used in this study. His approach was, initially at least,

---

⁴⁰ There was an extremely complex discussion on diverse kinds of objects - “external”, “internal”, “primary”, “secondary” etc. in the Brentano school. Cf. Cavalli 1997 for a discussion on this subject.
⁴¹ He does not really seem to distinguish, for example, between the creation of music (composition, writing etc., orchestration, elaboration, improvisation etc.), the performance of already created music, and, finally, reception, use (for example in dancing…) or listening to music – it seems obvious that in the first two categories of act/ions one is more clearly “objectivating” a will, the use in terms of listening (with a varying degree of attention) being much less natural to classify as this kind of immediate objectivation. Schopenhauer is, of course, right, on the other hand, in regarding music as much less dependent on “ideas” in the sense of conceptual or linguistically formed general structures. Still music is, notoriously, intimately tied to our preconceived ideas in terms of harmonic structures, traditions, familiarity with instruments, sounds, rhythms etc. The pretension of “universality” of musical discourse (“language”) is also rather exaggerated, it seems – just look at the contemporary musical genre of “world music”, a kind of music which is specifically “cross-over”, in contradistinction to what is stated to be the case for, for example, Western symphonic music, or many kinds of popular music (mostly the most spread “mainstream” music in all cultures?). On the other hand, the features at hand (distinctive features, to borrow a linguistic term) of music seem to be of a finite quantity – scales, intervals, rhythms, sounds etc. It is mostly not too difficult to supply a “grammar” of music in this sense, a “universal” grammar, not very different from its linguistic counterpart, in principle. Just as in linguistics, this kind of general grammar tends to lend itself as an example of an “essentialist” approach of study, regardless of the “nominalistic” ambitions of “contingency”-minded recent discourse analysis in Foucault’s aftermath.
⁴² Scoutus discusses this theme, according to the Polish historian of philosophy Tatarkiewicz, Vol 1 p.289
⁴³ This discussion touches upon the notoriously ambiguous use of the pair of concepts “constitution” and “construction” from the early 20th C (Husserl in epistemology and philosophy of mind, and Hilbert with all his followers in metamathematics) till current discussions on social theory and epistemology on “social constructivism/constructionism” vs. “essentialism”. An object is or might be taken as something “created” by the intentional (social) act/ion, that is constructed, typically objects of art, again, or something “pre-given” to it – or just constituted, as it were looking backwards, typically perceptual objects.
⁴⁴ Schopenhauer even (p 312-13) seems, following Leibniz, to attribute to music a metaphysical role, making music a kind of enunciation of true philosophy. Schopenhauer seems to refer to Leibniz’s ideas of a “mathesis universalis” as a mathematically organized general axiomatized philosophy, in which the notion of “prestabilized harmony” is given a crucial role.
⁴⁵ Beckman *Cultural Work*. 
based on the need to identify those groups in society who could be said to be parts of the cultural work-force. The inspiration for this interest is the transformation of societies (in the West, in the “post-industrial”, “post-service-economy” societies) towards what is called an “experience economy” (cf. the best-selling book by Gilmore and Pine). This transformation is perceivable in statistical terms by way of assessing the contributions of various branches of industry in occupational terms, and in common economic terms to GNP. In a time where there are practically no full-time occupied farmers in Western economies, the workforce engaged in “cultural” production is mushrooming: tourism, entertainment, media, education, research.

The classification, in labour statistics and related contexts, of someone as a “cultural worker” could offer a basis for empirical support for demonstrating the societal changes which we encounter today. Other arguments might be taken from economical statistics and customs authority statistics, where the products, notably the value (“exchange value”, to use Marx’s term) of those products (services and goods, and perhaps “experiences” paid for, though this category seems difficult to systematically distinguish from services in general), is compared to the value of other kinds of products. This presupposes, it seems, a distinction on the level of production itself – a cultural product emanates or results from cultural production. And we are brought back to need for distinguishing this kind of production from other kinds, and to Marx’s problem.

In some way the use of the term “work”, or better in French “œuvre”, in German “Werk”, straightens up, or narrows, the discussion. We can rest upon a venerable tradition in legal discourse, defining the notion of literary works, artistic works etc. in international conventions, as from the Berne convention. The legal profession has no fear of entering into what looks like hair-splitting discussions. A rather illustrative example might the following: a famous Swedish writer and singer (Ulf Lundell) sent a letter to a journalist (young woman) who had written a critical review of one of his texts. His letter was published by her in a book, without his consent – and a court found that this letter, due to his status of artist, was to be considered an artistic work, not just a letter expressing the anger of a famous artist of being ill-treated by a young critic. In the next edition of her book, the letter had to be taken out… Had the letter been judged just a personal reaction it would have been, evidently, a product in the Twardowskian sense, viz. a “psychophysical” product of Lundell’s mind. But it would not have been a work – nota bene a cultural work in the sense of author’s rights or copyright legislation. Every product produced by a cultural worker is not a cultural work in this sense, but just those products that are “intended” (even afterwards, in hindsight!) to be so.

Another example is the famous urinoir by Duchamp – a famous work of art (thus a cultural work), which was first pissed into and then smashed by another French artist (Pinoncelli) at an exhibition in 1993. Pinoncelli said that he was performing an artistic action – which fitted well into an established (anti-art) art tradition. The brightest brains in the French immaterial rights profession were mobilized to assist the court in the legal pursuit. Pinoncelli’s action of pissing and smashing the object was obviously a psycho-physical product, an event or performance, albeit not a concrete thing. (Twardowski also makes a distinction between non-lasting - such as events - and lasting products, actually.) The final outcome was that Pinoncelli was sentenced to one month in prison (on probation) but also, five years later, by an administrative court, to pay 296 000 FF to the French State for the demolition of a work of art.

---

46 I regret to find so many times that the English language is notoriously poor in respect of some crucial distinctions in the context of cultural theory..... This might be, in itself, an interesting field of study for sociologists of philosophy, or discourse studies.

47 It is not quite certain though that it was the same individual object as the one exhibited by Duchamp in 1923 (?). But Duchamp by his very action seems to have transformed – transubstantiated! – the very kind of objects into a work of art, at least a selected (signed?) number of them...

These legal cases remind of discussions in the Scholastic learned society about the sex of angels, or the existence (cf. Aquinas49) of a multitude of individual angels, in spite of the fact that, according to Aristotelian philosophy, matter was the individuating factor, and angels are not material… discussions which were also related to the never-ending effort to distinguish between “soul” (mind) and “body” (matter).

‘Cultural production’ could not be solely restricted to the production of works of art – it is not likely that general agreement will be found on the limits of cultural production; instead an entire spectrum of meanings, just as for the root concept ‘culture’ itself is offered. This means that the sphere of study will, for the notion to be useful in a systematic context, necessarily have to be operationally delimited, while upholding the ambition to describe a fundamental social change, taking place in our time. The definition will thus, as suggested above, but disputably, serve to exclude some fields from the study. The end result of this definitional move is that the field of cultural production studied is both narrower than culture in the “anthropological” sense (forms of human life) and wider than the fine arts and the cultural heritage, which are the spheres mostly included in the responsibilities of ministries of culture of most states and other public bodies around the world.50

Media – mass media

Cultural production is organized, just like any form of production. There is division of labour, education, institutional structures, methods of mustering resources, financial and other kinds, economic output, sales and purchases (= market), information and public relations likewise. This could be undertaken in more or less “industrial” forms, or by way of producing single units, “unique” objects. Intermediaries are abundant, like book production before printing, painting of icons according to traditional prescriptions etc. To take one of the oldest kinds of industry of cultural production, publishing, as an example, organisation of production involves at least the following relations and moments: A writer is involved in relations with an editor, someone pays her or him, takes care of the manuscript, selects for publication, organises printing, distribution and sales. This is, in contemporary liberal capitalist economies, mostly taken care of by private enterprise. The public sector is mostly also involved: libraries buy the books produced, copyright income is, levied and administered, by force of public legislation, library lending (in some countries, like Sweden) generates some income, thanks to state legislation on “neighbouring” rights. Unions of writers are organized, negotiate, with editors, and with the state, inform themselves about latest developments, employ people etc., editors lobby with states and the European Union.

Book production is a field of cultural production which is industrialised and/or mediatised in Europe, already since nearly 540 years, when printing was introduced in that part of the world.

A medium, coming between the author and the “consumer” or user of a particular work, renders a work accessible for a great number of people, re-producing the “work” or the “original”. The number of books printed did not in the beginning approach the quantities of copies which we today associate with publishing and did actually not substantially differ from what the scribes or copiers did also before the art of printing was generally introduced. The number of printing shops was, initially, nearly negligible.51 And this despite the evident interest of the Lutheran Church and the king (practically identical power structures, just as the Iranian regime today) to have as many Protestant religious material in the national language printed as possible, in addition to royal decrees.

---

49 In De ente et essentia
51 Sweden had just one printing shop running at the end of the 16th C, one century after Gutenberg.
A book is not always regarded as a *mass* medium, definitions overlapping and intersecting, but still book production illustrates the requirement to integrate studies on “media” with studies on other kinds of cultural production. Borderlines are hard to draw, specifically since media, (mass media) tend be omnipresent in all kinds of cultural production, in our era of Internet and digitization. Mass media differentiate into traditional mass media, like newspapers, radio and television on one hand, and news, comments, entertainment, information and all other kinds of material available over the Web on the other. Digitization brings media production into a new order where content could be recycled, as well as updated and manipulated practically without any limits. Cultural production still uses old forms but in addition, most artistic production and practically all other cultural production, now include some processing by a computer and/or other electronic machines. And digital processing – including “exact” copying - together with the possibilities of borrowing, manipulating and repeating, challenges the entire idea of “original”, fundamental to legal regulation of immaterial property since at least the 18th C, offering a master example of a new interplay of cultural production spheres.

The role of Internet blurs border-lines: Internet (the World Wide Web) might be regarded in itself as a separate medium, mass-medium and/or interpersonal medium, or reversely, as just a new form of “distribution of content”, otherwise forwarded to the user in some other way, such as broadcasting, press, but also telephones, smoke-signals, or speech.

*Consumption, use, experience*

Customary distinctions in economy between production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (not to speak of “experiences”) in the field of culture, also, precisely because of its “immaterial” ingredients tend to become obsolete. A cultural work, in the *product* sense, has mostly an immaterial aspect or “essence” – it could be repeated, performed, multiplied, etc. This does not prevent it from being subject to trade – and to legislation, such as copyright/author’s right regulation, which protects the temporary material “distribution of content”, otherwise forwarded to the user in some other way, such as broadcasting, press, but also telephones, smoke-signals, or speech.

A great number of cultural works does not even occur as copies in the ordinary sense of the word: they are primarily “services” offered, for example radio or television programmes, Internet site contents, just as in traditional arts live theatre or music performances. These arts demonstrated in fact intermediate stages between a “work” and a “copy” or exemplar of the same work. A set-up, interpretation or staging of a piece of theatre, dance or music is in itself a work, to be distinguished from the piece performed. Choreography is a particularly illustrative case: Tchaikovsky’s music is just one of the many ingredients in a ballet performance of the *Swan Lake*. Choreography varies for different performances, and moreover, dancers are in better or worse form during different performances, with the same choreography. Choreography is, in later years, documented in video, but was earlier rather memorized though also sketched in dance guides. Jazz is normally, just as other improvised music forms, essentially a performance, though it is naturally also recorded. A rock music “original” piece is, similarly, not a “work”, “written” into a score, but mostly a recording made by the author of the piece – whereby it is doubtful whether one could hardly speak of “interpretation” at all. The “same piece” might be performed by the authors in concert, but by everyone else just as “covers”.

Modern trade in the entertainment and cultural industries accordingly also includes a lot of intermediaries between the “work” and the ultimate performance, across the world. Musicals are, for example, often not only subject to rights of the authors (script writers, editors, composers

---

52 It is a philosophical question whether it remains even after being forgotten, or after a possible definite extinction of the human race or other intellectual beings from this planet or the universe. Note the etymology of the Latin “*consummatum est*”, as meaning ‘dead’.

53 Thoinot Arbeau’s *Orchesography* is an early and systematic work in this genre.
etc.) but also to rights of “concepts” of performances, or staging. The performances of a particular musical are thus strictly inspected by the holders of these rights, and could only to a minor degree be subject to interpretations of the “format” laid down. Similarly for television entertainment, that is, the typical field of “formatting” business. Traditional economic terms are deficient for many cases of these trading situations in culture. To say that a theatre performance viewer or concert listener “consumes” the play, in paying for it, or even “uses” it, seems inadequate. She might “enjoy” it, but perhaps the most adequate general term is precisely a term, for which an adequate translation is lacking in the English language, but provisionally rendered by “experience”. The Germans say “erleben”, which might be translated by to “live through”. This term does not—or rather did not until the latest decade!—fit well into commercial vocabulary, on the contrary, one might even associate a kind of basic non-commercial (even non-discursive!) connotation to it. Nevertheless it has—as already noted—been incorporated into the terminology of management trends, and also aroused interest in the scholarly world and therefore deserves some attention.

The notion of Erlebnis, “lived experience”\textsuperscript{55}, has a “romantic” history—in several senses. One—as indicated above—is the connotation of “being distant from economic trivialities”. In a sense taken from the history of philosophy and literature, ‘Romantic’ represents a perspective emphasizing other human faculties than reflection or reason, both in a logical and an epistemic order. Immediacy, intuition, imagination or “feeling” are thus key notions to this understanding of ‘romantic’, not only the association to “story-telling with an appeal to the broad masses”. Immediacy might be contrasted with perspectives giving priority in explanations to social or cultural contexts (whether this is ultimately possible, remains disputable) and reflective reason\textsuperscript{56}.

‘Consumption’ is thus deliberately, in some discourse, replaced by ‘experience’ to take care of some “romantic” connotations. Consumption, otherwise in economic contexts, might simply be identified with the economic transaction of paying for a good or a service (experience), incorporating this human action in a social context of exchange, and submitting it to quantifying calculation. This is a simplification of the account of human condition, since it neglects many transactions that are not quantifiable in a straightforward manner, and, to some extent, the growing interactivity in current trends of entertainment and “cultural consumption”.

For the cultural sector, impregnated by media, this kind of simplification is even more troubling, since much of media use and media production is financed by other means than being directly paid for at the moment of use, or production, by the individual consumer/user/-”expercerer”, for example by publicity, taxes or licence fees\textsuperscript{57}. Historically speaking, this context also prevailed for much cultural production, such as the financing of public monuments and urban architectural milieus—which today are deeply entangled with the most central part of the “experience industry”, viz. tourism. The idea of “consuming” the Eiffel Tower is a strange way of looking at things, even if “consumption” is an adequate expression for the tickets paid for elevator transport to the top of this edifice.

This same difficulty also pertains to large sectors of immaterial cultural production—first and foremost to the sector, of which this study forms a part: scholarly and scientific work. This sector is characterized (notably “basic” research) as structured according to the principle of “scientific communism”, in the sense that findings, results, analyses, ideas and suggestions are freely available and exchangeable, albeit governed by rituals of honesty constitutive for the entire scien-

\textsuperscript{54} The majority of “cultural consumers” in the narrow sense are “she’s”.

\textsuperscript{55} This is the English term employed in some philosophical contexts, such as the translation of Edmund Husserl’s works.

\textsuperscript{56} The notion of romantic is, obviously, very vague, not only in colloquial contexts but also in more regimented use. In philosophy, radically different thinkers as Hegel and Schelling are sometimes both classified as both “romantic”. On the other hand, Hume’s emphasis on feeling and criticism of rationalism—as well as his affinity with (and temporary friendship with) Rousseau could also be given this label.

\textsuperscript{57} Sound radio is, for example, in Sweden “free” for the individual consumer, since it is either financed by publicity, or by the television licence fee (no fee is levied for those who have only radio), or by organisations transmitting community radio.
tific endeavour and community. It is a kind of regulated “gift economy”\textsuperscript{58}, the immense economic significance of which might, paradoxically, be overlooked, although science and technology are hailed in numerous political proclamations.

Also in a number of other aspects the borderline between production and consumption, as well as the adequacy of concepts and terminology, is not adapted to immaterial and cultural production. In particular, the use of diverse music styles, entertainment material, clothing and other meaning-carrying customs and tastes, is commonly taken to identify social groups – as examined in numerous cultural studies in later years.\textsuperscript{59} In these cases, “consumption” is a way of “producing” an expression of identity. Similarly, to take a more traditional kind of cultural activity: the non-commercial, non-professional exercise of music, dance and visual arts might be regarded as production from one point of view (although “invisible” production, since it is not included in national accounts, for the most part) but is also a way of “consuming”, for example already written music scores, folk dances, or traditional handicraft models or designs.

**Popular culture, mass culture, convergence**

Media studies, often linked to political science, have primarily focussed on the functions of news and public affairs reporting and political comment, as the central role of the mass media. The phenomena touched upon above, together with the huge expansion of all media use in the richer part of the world (and to some extent in the poorer as well) have given a new horizon – where these functions have been integrated in a broader perspective. Entertainment – by far the financially most important part of the media field – has been taken into media studies, as well as increased attention to “popular” and “mass” culture – the focus of cultural studies. Consequently, media in separation, notably the mass media in the inherited sense, have tended to be less acknowledged as a distinct field of study – perhaps gliding back to a more etymological sense of the notion of media, as a means of communication, or expression, of all kinds. Studying media structure becomes a specific, but not separate, part of studying the structure of mediated communication, the main part of cultural expression in our part of the world.

Mediated communication – or mediatized culture in industrialised and post-industrialised countries - is mostly “popular” culture, that is, the culture of the majority of people. I shall say more about the notion of popular culture later. Let me just remind here of the brilliant study in a historical perspective on popular culture by Peter Burke.

The school of cultural studies, founded by Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and others – in particular the Birmingham school (Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige etc.) – also represents a radically different approach to the study of culture than traditional research in the humanities, although Williams himself was an academic scholar at one of the most prestigious universities in the world. This school has been very successful in penetrating most institutions of research in the broad field which we call culture, partially as a kind of response to the earlier Adorno-Horkheimer critical stance\textsuperscript{60} to “cultural industries” or mass culture.

One reason for the criticism launched by Adorno and Horkheimer against the cultural industries (in the first place the sound recordings and film industries) was its commercial nature – leading to standardisation, lack of creativity, and manipulative effects. And, since mediated culture is also, for its dominant part, commercial culture, mediated mass culture was more or less anathematized. The fact that the production of mediated culture is dependent both on reproducing machines and content storage devices, such as film, CDs, DVDs etc. being industrially manufactured and marketed, was the basis of this structure. It has been widely noted that Walter Benjamin\textsuperscript{61}, also member of, or at least associate to the same Frankfurt school of social research as Adorno and Horkheimer, did not share their critical attitude to new cultural technology. Ben-

\textsuperscript{58} This ritualized gift economy might in essential respects be compared to the structures described by Marcel Mauss.

\textsuperscript{59} Cf. Becker and others, *Passagen* for a study in a Swedish suburb commercial centre.

\textsuperscript{60} The most cited text is from the work *Dialektik der Aufklärung*.

\textsuperscript{61} Benjamin 1968/1936.
jamin is therefore today hailed as the forerunner of the school of cultural studies, and his works are re-edited and studied universally. Some of the critics of cultural studies movement today however note that there is a certain naiveté in the approach of this group of scholars to cultural industries. One of these critics, Graham Murdock, talks about a

“populist romance in which the downtrodden victims caricatured by crude economic determinists are revealed as heroic resistance fighters in the war against cultural deception.” (Murdock 2005:76)

This commercial feature is not absolute, as the contemporary use of the notion of cultural policies demonstrates: media production and distribution could also be lifted out of the market, for example by the State. Public service radio and television and also the Internet infrastructure (totally, in the beginning, and still for some of the physical backbones of it) are examples of this structure. Indirectly, with the abolition of state monopolies in broadcasting, also this part of the media structure has, however, in most countries become subject to competition, and thus to commercial conditions, at least in some degree.

Pierre Bourdieu, whose influence on contemporary studies of culture cannot be overestimated (and who is nearly omni-present in this study), may be cited as part of the counter-movement instigated by Benjamin and followed up by the cultural studies schools. Bourdieu’s notion in “The Distinction” of the “politics of culture” as incorporating traditional “cultural policies” in a web of power relations serving the interests of the “culturally rich”, is obviously difficult to reconcile with a wholesale rejection of popular or mass culture and the cultural industries serving this mass culture. Bourdieu is, however, as we shall see below, ambiguous on this subject. In fact, by strongly criticizing the media structure - “journalism” – from a rather lofty position as the holder of the most prestigious position in the French scholarly structure: a chair at the Collège de France - he approaches the position of Adorno and Horkheimer, and in a rather self-contradictory manner illustrates his own theses on the differences between capital holders (social, cultural and economic).

Convergence is the name given to a development, which is crucial to present-day cultural production. It includes the integration in artistic work of sound, moving images (in video form) and traditional arts like dance, theatre etc. Central to the media production in the narrow sense is that it includes newspapers being available over the Web; it includes also, on a structural level, the strategies of media corporations to engage in a number of media, and to profit from “synergy effects” by doing so. And in so doing, the same content, whether journalistic texts or programme material, such as weather forecast subscriptions etc. could be used in a number of products coming from the same firm or conglomerate.

“Content is king”, as the slogan sounds today in the media world, means rather that the immaterial side of production is also the economically important side. Just as only a few people would study the role of telephones in present society, focus is taken away from the intermediary phase of communication, in the sense of mechanisms of distribution and production. The opposite of what McLuhan proclaimed (if he really did so…) seems to happen: the message is all, regardless of by what machine it happens to be communicated. This development is a consequence of the mass reproduction technology installed by the digital revolution, but it is integrated in the evolution of mass cultural expressions dominating the cultural “surface”. Whether this is “popular” culture in a more authentic sense than other expressions of traditional culture (“folk” culture) or is just a “manipulation”, as suggested by Adorno and Horkheimer is largely couched in the ambiguity of language used in these contexts, ambiguities that are loaded with political significance. I will develop this problem more below.
**Structure, system and field: three theoretical approaches to social reality**

**STRUCTURE**

Social reality, just as the physical world, could be described in a number of different modes, discourses, scientific or non-scientific. The ambition to forge knowledge about society, or about human life in its social, that is, not primarily biological or “theological” aspects, in a systematic way is as old as Plato’s and Aristotle’s discussions about human mental life, political life etc. But the 19th century saw a new ambition to raise knowledge about human communication, collective organisations and political forms to a higher level of empirical and theoretical justification. The foundation of sociology as a scientific endeavor (Comte, Marx), the development of political economy (Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, Marx, Mill, Jevons), the first steps of anthropology (A. Humboldt) and linguistics (W. Humboldt, Paul), and a new methodological awareness in history (Ranke) are all testimonies to this ambition.

The notion of structure is not a notion exclusively tied to the more recent trend named “structuralism” – it existed in philosophical and sociological discourse long before. For example, it occupies a rather predominant place in Husserl’s doctrines about “intentional acts”, which might be conceived as a “philosophy of the structure of consciousness”. The notion is also given a more or less mathematical or logical treatment in various contexts.

It acquires a particularly central role as a term denoting a particular type of research direction, model or trend, with some research efforts in linguistics that could be traced back to the beginning of the last century. The “synchronic” linguistic research in its contemporary form is generally taken to start with Saussure (1916) but could be linked to much earlier philosophical or “universal grammar” for example with the Port-Royal school from the 17th C in France, a tradition continued by Wilhelm von Humboldt in the 19th C and notably the philosopher Anton Marty (1908), who belonged to the same philosophical tradition as Husserl (the Brentano school).

But also Husserl and his followers’ notion of “Wesenswissenschaft” fitted well into the same pattern: Husserl’s emphasis on the general laws of research into the fundamentals of science, or the “essence laws” (Wesensgesetze), as a matter of fact served as a theoretical basis for much of analytical research into social and cultural life – such as research into what became known as Life-world (Lebenswelt), by scholars like Schütz/Schutz, Scheler. But also the already cited Neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer’s research into the theory of symbolic forms – relaying on or developing the traditional Kantian framework of a priori categories for the experience (Erfahrung) - fits into this pattern of research into general schemes of social and human contexts.

Actually, the new theoretical (empirical) synchronic linguistics touched the philosophy of language, and of mind, in a significant way several times. One line of association is the following: Husserl asked Karl Bühler, who participated in his phenomenological seminar at Göttingen on logic and theory of meaning, to read Anton Marty’s magisterial work from 1908 on general grammar, and Bühler himself, though later mostly devoting himself to psychology, wrote a work

---

62 A term used by the English psychologist Titchener in the 19th C – according to Wikipedia Dec 19, 2007. The Swedish National Encyclopedia has an impressive amount of references for the term – 700-800 - which probably makes it one of the most frequent crucial notions in scholarly discourse.

63 Marty 1908

64 The systematic ambiguity of the English term “experience” is a source of considerable trouble for all translators of philosophical texts from German, since it is used both for “Erfahrung” and “Erlebnis”, the latter a crucial concept for most German philosophy of mind from the last decades of the 19th century – as from Dilthey.

65 To the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the best known inquiries are of course those made by Bolzano, Frege (albeit both German!), Peirce and Russell, and, later, Wittgenstein.
classical to all students of linguistics, “Sprachtheorie” – in 1934, following a broad account of the “theory of expressions” as a whole. This book in its turn inspired the linguist Roman Jakobson, then residing in Prague, at Marty’s university, to further develop Bühler’s ideas of the tripartite functions of language (Signal/Symptom, Symbol, Appell) into a finer set of distinctions. Jakobson inspired the Dane Louis Hjelmslev for his rigid thesis on the “Foundations of theory of language”, which might be regarded as some kind of manual for linguistic structuralism in a more rigid shape. Now, Bühler and probably also linguists like Jakobson, inspired Wittgenstein in promoting a view of language as action, giving rise to a whole school of what might be termed pragmatist philosophy of language (Austin and other “Oxford” linguistic philosophers).

The push for the generalised use, beyond the field of linguistics, of the term “structure” was however given much later, by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (born 1908) and his Structures élémentaires de la parenté in 1949, and his French colleague Georges Dumézil (1898-1986) working mostly in the comparative history and/or sociology of religion, and, significantly, the teacher and friend of Michel Foucault.

The central concept of structure can be used in more and less rigid fashions. In logic the definition is rather straightforward: structure is an ordered set of elements together with the relations ordering them <R<, x, y,…,n>.

A more beautiful definition is suggested by Lévi-Strauss – grasping back to Pre-Socratic philosophy in Heraclit’s talk about “harmony”.

“Structuralism is the search for unsuspected harmonies…”

Just like other metaphors taken from house-building (rules, foundations etc.) it could be given a more static, mathematical, interpretation – identifying a number of individual phenomena, such as individual occurrences of words, or of families in a particular society, motives in a picture, a musical piece performed, etc. as tokens of a particular type. This identification (making-same) of a type is usually made by identifying a certain number of features of the phenomena observed.

These features might be observed as constituents of the phenomenon – such as in linguistics a particular sound feature – or as what is (in Husserlian terms) called “Momente”, that is, parts, such as shape, which apply to the whole of the phenomenon. In German, the term Gestalt was used for this kind of “part of the whole”, giving its name to a whole school of psychology.

In more traditional philosophical terms, structure is not very different from “essence”, that is, the set of qualities common to a whole set of “experienced” phenomena, which leaves out the “inessential” or “individual” or “accidental” features, classifying all phenomena as belonging to one species or kind. Structures are general, repeatable, just as types. Structure is however not, mostly, identified to “class” – which is in its turn very close to “type”.

Essence, kind, type, form and structure thus all belong to a common family of notions – well-known from the historical divergences in the theory of knowledge and metaphysics, since

---

66 The context of his “Sprachtheorie”, published just a year after his “Ausdruckstheorie”, to the earlier work is seldom observed. A general theory of expressions was, in fact, outlined by the Italian philosopher and aesthetician Benedetto Croce already in the beginning of the 20th C.

67 Actually already preconceived by Husserl’s favourite disciple Adolf Reinach (killed in the war in 1917), who himself used the term “Spruchakt” as early as in 1914.

68 Heraclit’s use of the Greek word “harmonia” is, to my knowledge not very clear, but is, according to some musicologists, not at all the same as later uses in the theory of harmony. The Greek term has the general meaning of “being together” in some order. The order, in the midst of “war” (polemos) has given rise to an attribution of “dialectics” to Heraclit.


70 Actually Husserl and some other of his colleagues from the same period, not least Twardowski, were developing a theory of wholes and parts, a “merology” – later formalized and axiomatized by Twardowski’s Polish pupil Stanisław Leśniewski. The notions of “independent” parts (Stücke) and dependent parts (Momente) were basic in this theory. This theory is a basic element of the philosophical discipline of “formal ontology”, also an important ingredient in the production of the Swedish philosopher Ivar Segelberg (1914-1987).
Plato. Structure, however, distinguishes itself from essence in as far as it is generally perceived as a more complex specified set of features, common to a multitude (manifold) of phenomena – spatially more extended than what usually is thought to be an “individual”. We rarely think of a state, a family, or any kind of social complex entity as an “individual”, although it is commonly conceived as an “object”\textsuperscript{71}. Structure is thus usually linked to for example a whole set of linguistic utterances, a language, a whole piece of music (not individual tones or notes), a social set-up of a group, an institution, a population in an area or a politically delimited space (a municipality, village, region, state etc.).

Structure is usually linked to a “time-independent”, persistent or static, kind of objects for research: even if changes in structures are mostly a primary subject of interest, the structure as such is a pattern defined independently of its existence in time. It could be repeated infinitely many times, anywhere, in principle. Structures are, in this sense, “eternal”, just as mathematical entities are “eternal” – which was the reason for Plato’s high esteem of those objects, making them more or less equal to divine entities (which, by definition are not dependent on time as are living creatures, though there are examples of mortal gods).

Linguistics, actually, as a discipline separate from “philology” is mostly tied to the “eternal and universal” features of languages – it was launched as a “synchronic” and “descriptive” science, as distinct from “diachronic” comparative and historical investigation into developments and relations of languages, a dominant kind of research in most study of language up to the middle of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. This kind of approach to language had, as is repeatedly emphasised by Chomsky and others, predecessors in the Port-Royal Grammar, Wilhelm von Humboldt and others, before it was systematically presented by Saussure, Jakobson and others. Paradoxically, as it may sound, dynamic structures might in themselves be classified as “eternal” – that is, abstract repeatable objects.

The introduction of change into the notion of structure is not in itself a contradiction, on the contrary the term dynamic structures incorporates relations of change into the notion of structure, a basic approach in, for example, modern science, both physics and biology. The historical approach in philology was also tied to ideas of a “law-like” change of languages. And, of course, Hegelian (Marxian) philosophy of history is also easily conceived as a kind of “dynamic” structuralism, just as evolutionism (cf. below).

The study of language was, as indicated, the model for the method and theory of structural studies in other fields of social, cultural and human relations. Lévi-Strauss, the pioneer in anthropology, was influenced by Jakobson – but also Roland Barthes’s semiology was already sketched by Saussure. Semiotics was feeding theoretical approaches into a number of research disciplines and interdisciplinary projects for several decades – being in some respects closely related to structuralism, in other respects rather loosely attached to it.

Structuralism as a theoretical approach, method, and even attitude to social and cultural phenomena, programatically – at least in some prominent authors like Umberto Eco, or authors that in some respects rather should be regarded (and regarded themselves) as adversaries or reactive followers of structuralism (post-structuralists) like Foucault and Derrida - transgresses border-lines between research and other forms of cultural production, like literature and arts criticism. These authors, apart from scholarly texts, also express themselves in novels, essays, non-scientific articles etc. From the point of view of this study this is not a problem, but on the contrary a natural reference\textsuperscript{72}.

In cultural production – notably the media – the notion of structure is mostly linked to institutional and economic organisational forms. Form is as ambiguous, and as central, a term in theoretical discussions since Aristotle. Just as structure is essentially (sic!) repeatable, form is.

\textsuperscript{71} For the notion of ’object’ cf. my book \textit{Content and Object}. The ‘pluralistic’ notion of object is perhaps best represented by Benno Erdmann, whose table of objects is reproduced in my work.

\textsuperscript{72} From more “disciplined” scholars criticism is not rarely launched to this effect – for example analytic philosophers find their opinions as to the "unscientific" character of "continental" philosophy often confirmed by this circumstance.
Although content and form are often contrasted - form often being identified with structure - the existence of a structure of content is not generally denied by scholars of texts, discourses and meaningful behaviour. Also the media content analysis, as outlined by Berelson and Krippendorff, would in looser terms be classified as a form of “quantitative” approach to cultural analysis, and might be, obviously, regarded as a study of content structure. The idea of “discourse analysis”, as suggested by Foucault, and today the focus of numerous studies, presupposes that the “content” of a text, a custom, a social set-up or the like, could be meaningfully studied, generalizing several tokens of texts, customs etc. to one common discourse. Also discourse analysis might be termed, I would maintain, a study or analysis of the structure of content, despite its many contestations of attitudes and positions in structuralist or semiotic analyses in the older version, and in spite of the proclaimed “anti-essentialism” of these schools of thought (proclaiming universal “contingency” and “social constructionism”). These schools also attach to linguistic studies and theories – perhaps even of the rather radical forms represented by Hjelmslev and his school.

One might, again in a rather loose manner, draw a distinction between “internal” structure (structure of content) and “external” structure, the latter being perhaps also a candidate for the label of “form”. This label was adopted by a precursor of the structuralist schools, viz. the Russian “formalist” school (1915 to the 1920s), of which Jakobson was one of the founders. Reference has also been made to Cassirer’s magnum opus on the philosophy of symbolic forms from the same epoch. The analysis of literary and other artistic forms – and linguistic forms – could be regarded as an analysis of “the form of content” – in distinction from “external” structure, in the sense of the more general social and institutional context.

Thus, finally, structure is a term which might be applied both to the “content” (sometimes, in the Aristotelian-Scholastic terminology, “matter” – hylè (ὑλή)) and the “form” morphè (μορφή).

The distinction between content and form (structure) has, on a practical level, in cultural policies, won a certain acceptance, and operational relevance (cf. below) for subvention systems, such as those to the mass media, since there is a certain consensus that public support might be given to the structure of production, but should not influence content. This discussion permeates debates on public broadcasting, but with the opposite approach: public broadcasting is supposed to deliver certain kinds of content, which is not safeguarded by the commercial private media. This “operational” clarification would thus preserve the notion of structure for other levels of analysis than the written (or spoken) “text” or the “subtext” or “implied presuppositional content” (employing ideas from some parts of earlier hermeneutical and linguistic philosophy), or “discursive context”.

The focus of these discussions will therefore be on the general social institutional, administrative, managerial and economic context – and in particular its relations to the “content” in one of the many senses attached to that expression, that is, the context of a text, and the context of the discourse. Nevertheless the study of structure is, reversely, acquiring its principal political interest precisely by its relation to the wider, more concrete, institutional social context. It is clear, as will be discussed below, that a general consensus as to the border-lines to be drawn between content and structure is rather a vain hope – it is part of the wider political controversy accompanying the role of the public sector in regard to cultural production, or even more generally: the positions as to the boundaries between the private, the civil, and the public sector in society. This

---

73 Berelson & Krippendorff
74 represented by authors as Laclau, Fairclough, Potter and others – for a general overview cf. Phillips & Winther Jørgensen – I would maintain, in spite of the proclaimed “anti-essentialism”
75 The debate in the EU is more or less continuous, the Amsterdam Treaty Appendix having not at all terminated the controversy.
76 For the “trinity” of contexts distinguished here I associate to the terminology of Phillips & Winther Jørgensen.
subject is a marker for most of the political positions in Western contemporary society and it is also, necessarily, reflected in the use of language, even at this rather abstract or subtle level.

For the structure of cultural production, in addition to the rather crude concrete “subsidy-based” definition above, an “enumerative” definition would also be possible, generalising the one proposed by the Danish media researcher Preben Sepstrup (1994, 1996). The problematic factor is, as discussed above, “content” – since most inquiries into cultural production presupposes that content could be contrasted with “structure”, which, as suggested is not always feasible.

Sepstrup gives the following parameters for an account of media structure:

1. *Kinds* of media/cultural fields: main groups and subgroups
2. *Number* of items (companies, editors, actors etc.) in the diverse groups.
3. *Content*
4. *Use* and *users*
5. *Economy*, *funding*, *employment*
6. *Regulation*
7. *Effects*, *impact*

As a subgrouping Sepstrup offers the following parameters, particularly influencing media economy (that is, parameter no 5):

- Supply
- Competition for time and money of users and for advertisers’ money.
- *Media policy*
- *Information technology*
- *Media use* (information, entertainment etc)
- *Media choice of advertisers*

A number of these factors, but not all, may also be generalised over the entire cultural production field.

## System

### The “pure” systems approach

The second, in some sense parallel but in other aspects antagonistic, model of accounting for social reality, as well as other forms of realities, physical and biological primarily, is centred on the notion of *system*.\(^{77}\) Basically, the notion of system in its contemporary use is a follow-up of the notion of structure – a concept integrated as a special case under system\(^{78}\). It might be tempting to

\(^{77}\) for a general introduction to the theory of systems, reference could be made to encyclopedias, my preferential one is the French “Universalis” – where the article under “Systèmes, (Sciences de)” provides a survey over the uses of the notion in a number of contemporary research contexts. Much of what is said here is taken from this article, written by Jean-Louis Le Moigne, professor at the university of Aix-Marseille.

\(^{78}\) Cf the reference in the French Encyclopedia Universalis, Version 9, released in 2000, article on Système: « C’est sans doute le structuralisme, dans les formulations sur lesquelles il s’est fondé des premiers textes de Claude Lévi-Strauss en 1948 au célèbre « Que sais-je ? » de Jean Piaget), qui synthétise de façon assez généralement acceptée ce deuxième paradigme modélisateur auquel la science des systèmes contemporaine se réfère aussi nécessairement qu’au paradigme cyberné-\(\ldots\)tique. » And furthermore :» La célèbre définition finale donnée en 1968 par Piaget : « Une structure est un système de transformation autonome », en rend explicitement compte. » It seems, actually, that the notion of system risks, along with other very general notions, the fate of being transferred to some kind of historical workshop – the article in, has, for example, not been rewritten to take in references after 1989. 15 years is a long period for research trends (although 2400 years is also quite a normal span of time for a conceptual development….\ldots
think the other way round, classifying a system as a dynamic structure, which is self-regulating in the sense of accommodating changes. A system is a structure equipped with a “feed-back mechanism”.

The notion of system is used in a number of contexts and meanings. In philosophy it is omnipresent at least since the 19th C, with Hegel and Kierkegaard as two antagonistic figures. In sociology and social theory it plays a central role in Habermas’s writings but perhaps the most complete and consistent (or extreme!) presentation is given by Niklas Luhmann79, with whom Habermas was in frequent dialogue. But also what is referred to as “communication theory” or “information theory” – that is, the theory of information transfer systems presented by Shannon and Weaver in the 1940s exploits the notion. That theory has been very much in use in communication and media studies, as well as parts of linguistics – though its popularity seems to be declining, since the attention to social contexts tends to replace what might be termed a theory of “tubes”, from sender to receiver of “information”.

The idea of system relates much to biological sciences: life is basically a system of exchange, with a view to (a teleological concept…) preserving some kind of equilibrium state – where life goes on…

Ecological considerations deal, by and large, with the conservation of larger systems (environments) being challenged by smaller ones, such as polluting machine systems, human production systems in general, etc.

A system is by definition deterministic, that is, the inclusion of unforeseeable forces or impulses should as far as possible be eliminated. A latent conflict is therefore mostly present between views of human action as principally distinct from other kinds of animal behaviour – by inclusion of factors like “intentionality” or “will”. A number of theorists, not least in philosophy, argue that this is an illusory conflict, and that human will, and intentional act(ions) are just to be integrated as factors in a larger ecological context. Statistical variations and, perhaps, stochastic calculi might account for this factor – without making the system less deterministic. I presume that this conflict, or lack of conflict, is to some extent conceptual and terminological as well as a question of categories used (presupposed) in the construction of the theory, rather than an issue which could be closed by empirical means. It is in this sense, I suggest, also a philosophical (epistemological, transcendental) issue, if you take that word to denote issues that are dependent on larger systems or clusters of concepts, central to theory-building but not really dependent on observation80.

Apart from Luhmann, a number of other system-theorists such as Ilya Prigogine, or von Bertalanffy, from various disciplinary points of view, have inspired various employments of these models in the field of communication and cultural production. Luhmann’s attempt to study the media from this point of view81 – trying to demonstrate the media as a system differentiated from other social systems was, in my view, far from convincing – indeed it demonstrates perhaps rather the limitations of the systems approach to cultural production research. This is probably to be expected, for philosophical reasons: if the idea of a system primarily serves the needs for description of deterministic processes, that is, processes that are in some sense predictable by general functions, equations or “laws”, then any process which is basically involving such rather unpredictable (at least to the common sense) factors as imagination, creativity, talent, feelings, responses etc. might be difficult to accommodate within such a model.

---

79 Luhmann Soziale Systeme.
80 We seem, inevitably, to slip back into epistemological problems – which is not necessarily a major problem: any analysis of concepts or theories has, I believe, some hook to meta-theoretical considerations – mostly linked together in a major effort to bring an order into an entire field of investigation, reflection, or observation.
81 Luhmann, Niklas, Die Realität der Massenmedien 1996.
System and network

Basically, I suggest, this is also the reason why, despite the attractiveness to biological and ecological considerations and therefore also to research on human life, the systems approach has tended to be overrun by other approaches, primarily that of networks.

Networks have been described in mathematical terms (e.g. Karlquist), but have reached a particular prestige in interdisciplinary social science with Manuel Castells’s monumental work on the Information society – the first part of which is devoted to the “Network society”.

Basically a network is a structure (using “structure” as a generic concept, covering both system and network…) which is not as much linked to deterministic perspectives as a system – a network is thus not seen as something which is self-renewing or having a “goal” of preserving itself – it is much less teleological than a system. The nodes and forces in a network are possible to describe and assess, but there is much more space for chance and improvisations than in structures conceived as systems. All parts of a network could not be said or determined to play a role for or influence all other parts – although they “hang together” in some way. Network descriptions, primarily, are associated with more loose spheres of causal contexts, and pay homage mostly to “contingency” – which in some interpretation might mean the absence of deterministic models (linked to necessity).

A network might encompass systems and subsystems within itself, but also other structures not easily describable as systems, as well as individual objects not easily described as networks. A network is not an all-embracing concept – in contrast with Luhmann’s use of the notion of system, which seems to acquire an ontological role: everything could be described as being a system, human beings, motor cars, computers, mountains, programmes etc. ‘System’ in his use seems nearly to assume the role which ‘object’ (Gegenstand) plays in some early 20th century philosophy referred to before (Meinong, Husserl, Twardowski).

Generally speaking, the ontology presupposed for network theory seems to be more “generous” or non-reductive than that of systems theory. This is in my view one attractive feature of the model – the nostalgia for monistic, dualistic, (or whatever number you like) ontological models might obstruct constructive model designs for research. In this sense models suggested by Neo-Kantian or phenomenological theorists – from Meinong, Twardowski and Husserl and down to Nicolai Hartmann and Nicolai Hartmann are much more free from prejudices of a metaphysical nature (of the kind “matter is all that exists”, “mind is all that exists”, “only matter and mind exist, but we do not know well how they interact” etc. etc.). Actually this attitude reduces the ambitions, or rather restores it, of ontology – that is, to the function and role it plays in ordering our knowledge. This does not reduce ontology to an empirical or pragmatic issue – somehow the awkward and cumbersome questions on the “necessity” or “apriority” of ontological categories remain. But it does relate ontology to the need of ordering knowledge – what Kant called the critique of reason. Network models in some way better fit the more open and “generous”, rather than reductive spirit.

System and Life-world

Jürgen Habermas and Luhmann were long discussion partners – and Habermas in his magistral work on the theory of communicative action performed detailed analyses centred on the notions of system on one hand and the notion of ‘Life world’ (‘Lebenswelt’) on the other. Habermas uses the notion of system in a different way from Luhmann – he relates to earlier philosophical uses, in Hegel, Marx and perhaps also Kierkegaard. Habermas, as a professional philosopher (Luhmann’s academic background was law) is familiar with Heidegger and German idealism as well as other dominant trends in German post-war philosophy like phenomenology and herme-

---

83 Castells vol I.
84 Cf. the introduction to Luhmann’s Soziale Systeme.
neutics. System is for Habermas the organised, external skeleton of society – by and large determined by social constraints, force and power. Its counterpart is the more “intimate” or “everyday” part of social life – the term (also used by Husserl) is Lebenswelt. This micro-social level has quite different norms and customs. Habermas inquires into the interplay between these two worlds – and sets out a general framework for research in what he terms communicative action, employing research tools from social science, action theory (Marx, Peirce, G H Mead, Talcott Parsons, his dialogue partner in *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*) and phenomenological research into the “meaningful structure of the social world” (Schütz).

Habermas seeks to integrate a more rigid approach of deterministic systems and a “softer” approach of intentional-action-oriented micro-sociology and cultural research, as well as a - basically human-science-oriented - hermeneutic approach.

### Field

The third approach to social studies encompasses sociology in a more traditional sense (“quantitative” - statistical as well as “qualitative”-descriptive), anthropology, ethnomethodology (if this is separated from anthropology), cultural studies (in the sense coined by Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and others) and some philosophical ambitions. Its key concept is ‘field’. The researcher normally associated with this concept, and a few other related notions (cultural and social capital, habitus) is of course Pierre Bourdieu. What interests us here is first of all how the notion of field could be distinguished as a heuristic or useful-for-research concept. In what way does it deserve more attention than Structure or System (Network or Life-world)? I will, for the time being, disregard the simple sociological explanation: Bourdieu himself won a reputation as the sociologist of our time, immensely productive, occupying a central position in his country and large parts of the world, not only as a scholar but also as an intellectual who is engaged in social struggles for justice and equality.

Bourdieu does not really claim originality for his conceptual apparatus. As for “habitus” he explicitly relates to a concept from medieval philosophy, circulating among a number of them, denoting roughly the acquired set of knowledge, customs and attitudes serving as a kind of personal equipment for the individual – but rooted in the common culture of a particular group and time. As for another of his most famous terms, “cultural capital”, this notion was used more than 20 years before Bourdieu by the Swedish writer and journalist Stig Dagerman, roughly in the same sense as Bourdieu uses the term.

Bourdieu’s innovation in methodology approaches might be summarized as follows: He allows a more descriptive, and less formally detailed, or exact, kind of model for his inquiries into various aspects of social or rather socio-cultural life. Still his descriptive analyses rest upon a basis of statistical researches – surveys or inquiries by questionnaires, worked out into statistical correspondence charts.

Bourdieu takes a programmatic empiricist position – and airs a kind of idio-synchrony against philosophy, which he seems to consider ursurping some of his own fields of research. Ac-

---

86 Lebenswelt is basically the kind of world which is unquestioned, and as such the “background” to all our more reflective and analytic activities. But Lebenswelt is also possible to inquire into – discovering structures, patterns and norms – in a scholarly fashion. This is by and large what micro-sociology, ethnology, anthropology, cultural research is working with.

87 Alfred Schütz’s major work from 1934 was largely inspired by Husserl and Weber.

88 Cf. the description given of Averroës’ (Arabic, in Latin translation) notion in *Universalis* « l’intellet matériel devient intellect en habitus, c’est-à-dire possession stable de connaissances, de concepts, dont le nombre s’accroît à volonté ». Norbert Elias also uses the term in his great work on the civilization process.

89 Bourdieu has himself given some indication in the “Universalis” – he has written the article on “Consommation culturelle”...

90 Dagerman 1948.
tually he advances some points which seem to indicate an aspiration for a primacy of sociology in the scholarly universe...

A ‘field’ is a term which has – at least for those who have slight recollections of school physics – a relation to force: most pupils have probably made their first experiments in physics with iron dust spread out on a paper with a magnet underneath. The iron dust is normally ordered in a neat (even beautiful) pattern, reflecting the magnetic field. So the “invisible” force becomes visible, as a field of pattern of the spread of the iron dust.

The field structure is primarily understood, it seems, to be a field of forces. Mathematically a field of forces is a field of vectors, that is, quantities with a direction. The mathematical precision of Bourdieu’s notion should probably not be over-exploited, sometimes the notion of force is less important, and the field might be conceived as corresponding to a more general “picture” of a particular social context. ‘Field’ also gives military associations – a battlefield is the place or space where opposite actors and forces meet, and fight.

One crucial property of a field is its less sharp limits to what is outside it, and to other fields possibly overlapping it. Bourdieu does not really attempt to draw sharp lines despite his ambitious suggestions to map diverse field of capital (social, symbolic, cultural, economic).

From a methodological point of view, Bourdieu’s approach, which tends to be adopted by a large number of researchers in cultural and social “qualitative” research, although Bourdieu is far from lacking respect for quantitative, statistical data and correlation studies, is a descriptive method, in a more “humanistic” tradition. This does not mean that both traces of structuralist, post-structuralist and perhaps also systemic approaches could not be found, on the contrary. But on the whole Bourdieu – despite his somewhat scornful attitude to phenomenological trends in social sciences – appears to attach to the broad tradition of descriptive and interpretative science denoted by the term hermeneutic, rather than trying to single out “laws” of development, or binding historical principles. His scepticism towards a relativistic understanding of sociology or criticism of laymen’s pretentions in sociology reinforces the impression of someone working in a spirit well in conformity with the Husserlian tradition.

Bourdieu himself mainly concentrates, in his studies on cultural production, on the arts and their social role, and on the scientific/higher education field. He has also made occasional examinations of other spheres of cultural production. The notion of cultural production used in this study is largely derived from Bourdieu’s definitions. His occupation with the media is rather occasional – the only publication that won some reputation is “On Television” – which is a product of a mixture of political and personal polemics, some scattered observations, and somewhat too far-reaching generalisations.

His conceptual apparatus has, as a modification of the too rigid approaches of structuralism and system theories, won very large acceptance – and wide application in most contexts where cultural and social studies are undertaken.

Conclusions?
The three different approaches to modelling social and cultural reality sketched above, might not be as diverse as they look like – all approaches in social science have the ambition of formulating generalisations in terms of broad overviews, taking account of larger groups of phenomena, social contexts and actors, rather than more delimited sectors of society. For better or good, this is the destiny of most social and cultural scholarly activity, from linguistics and history to social theory, economy, and - theology.

For the “exact” sciences, including mathematics, the appearance of a stable and cumulative growth usually seems more convincing. The debates and diversity of views on the foundations of mathematics and the philosophy of science for more than one and a half century do not, however, entirely warrant this sharp demarcation between the two reigns of human systematic knowledge. The frequent references in popular debates on science to quantum mechanics and the Heisenberg principle of insecurity may often be based on misunderstandings and lack of preci-
sion, but the condition of the natural sciences and mathematics, just as the social and cultural sciences, is rooted in their being part of human endeavours, linked to human capacities of constructing models, whether tied to logico-mathematical systems or other kinds of models, in other words, concrete linguistic or discursive manners of understanding and expressing insights, data, theories and generalisations. The difference of principle lies primarily in the object of study. While the natural sciences do not in general examine human products of mind and conditions of social interaction – including scientific communication, production and interaction - this is the basic interest for these other branches of scholarly effort (Wissenschaft).

Mathematics might, paradoxically, in view of its central position in the natural sciences, as the model of “exact” sciences, form an exception, that is, also be included in the “non-natural science” field: it is difficult to deny that mathematics, for most of its parts at least, is a product of human invention, construction, analysis and reflection. Its object of study might be disputed, but a mathematical object is clearly distinct from a physical or natural object. The objects of study for the natural sciences are primarily distinct from the human cultural and social life. This being stated as a principle, there are many exceptions, in the form of intermediate scientific fields.

Medicine deals with the human body, including its interaction with its environment and other human beings, and including the very part of the body which produces much of our cultural and social conditions, viz. the brain. Technology, including bio-technology, is, though heavily relying on mathematical natural science, a scholarly endeavour entirely directed to products of human invention and construction. Cognitive science takes brain research, other biological research fields, technological research in computer science, linguistics, philosophy, psychology into its wide interdisciplinary basket of inspirations. The process of “artificialisation” of this planet renders, in general, frontiers between diverse fields of scholarly enquiry gradually more difficult to draw. This process, as a matter of fact is one of the major general arguments – distinct from the arguments put forward in this study – for the thesis that we are entering a reign of the mind, a mind which is constantly producing new material objects, but “informing” (in the Aristotelian sense of bringing more “form” to) the matter on a constantly rising scale.

The preceding brief accounts of some major – one might even say fashionable – articulations of general perspectives or surveys of social and cultural life of human beings should have made some of their metaphorical bases, whether spatial (“field”, “structure”) or more general (“system”), present. By no means this reduces their value – it only inserts them into a wider framework of articulating scholarly endeavours as such.

Experience, ”Erlebnis” and cultural production

A notion central in many discussions on contemporary cultural production is ”experience”. This term may be perceived as a leitmotif through this study as well.

“Experience” is a concept with deep philosophical roots 92, such as those stemming from the British empiricists in the 18th C, Locke, Hume, Berkeley. The concept of “Erfahrung” was then taken over by Kant and permeated his entire philosophical “Copernican revolution”, in turning philosophical analysis from the actual being “outside” our experience, to the “conditions of experience” – by this “transcendental” approach thus ending the quarrels between rationalist and empiricist epistemologies. Whether this was a final solution or not has been disputed since Kant.

After Kant, in philosophy and the emerging empirical study of the mind, psychology, however, the notion of experience, so central and seemingly unambiguous to philosophers in the English language, before Kant, was split up into two distinct and crucially independent notions in the reflection following Kant’s “Copernican revolution”. German philosophy, which doubtlessly had the lead in European thought for more than 100 years after Kant, took, beginning with

92 Cf. Erlebnis and Erfahrung in Ritter.
Fichte (1762-1814), that is, even before Kant’s death, a new direction. Fichte, in a lecture in 1801\textsuperscript{93} made a crucial distinction between ‘experience’ in the more English and perhaps Kantian sense – viz. \textit{Erfahrung} – and a concept crucial to what is today named “Romantic” thought, \textit{Erlebnis}. Regrettably the English language has no single word for \textit{Erlebnis}, to directly render this distinction, though a proposal was made in translation of phenomenological texts (see above) to render the German term by ‘lived experience’, and reserve ‘experience’ for the German \textit{Erfahrung}. In current English language texts the distinction is rarely made outside the rather restricted circle of phenomenological philosophers.

Fichte’s notion of \textit{Erlebnis}, or rather the verb \textit{erleben}, had, however, a deep-going influence on much of the ensuing reflection on the philosophy of mind, and psychology alike. Precisely the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} C saw the beginning of a “scientific” empirical psychology, involving experiments and systematic observation.

But also outside the philosophy of mind and psychology a number of other philosophical and scientific fields became deeply impregnated by the notion of \textit{Erlebnis} – as distinct from \textit{Erfahrung}.

Before going too deeply into the history of philosophical and psychological concepts, for which we possess an invaluable guide in Ritter’s monumental work, one has to ask: what is the gist of the distinction?

Briefly, it might be concentrated in one word: \textit{directness} or perhaps better for our present study, \textit{immediacy/immediateness}.

In Romantic philosophy – and note that the Romantics may be the first thinkers to reflect on what may be termed cultural policy – the distinction between immediate experience, feelings, intuition or whatever expression being used on one hand, and experience in the inherited sense of something structured, ordered and “known” was fundamental. To Romantic philosophy the level of immediate experience is primary to higher levels, in concordance with its emphasis on the direct, intimate and life-related processes (cf. Rousseau’s praise of the wild or primitive man and primitive society, and Fichte’s explicit priority to the feeling). This emphasis on directness is a reaction to “rationalist” philosophy – the hallmark of which is \textit{reflection} -, whether of the preceding (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolff) brand or “idealistic” of Hegel’s kind. As noted, the notion of Romanticism is not very precise, since Hegel is normally included in this category.

Roots to earlier thinking are not absent: both Hume’s emphasis of “inclinations” or “propensities” as the ultimate escape from philosophical dead ends like that of causality chains or moral norms, as well as Rousseau’s strand of thought are there – we should keep in mind that Hume and Rousseau were, for a short period, friends…

Links to other philosophies and theories of mind from the same period might also be found – perhaps the most striking parallel is Kierkegaard with his criticism of “systems” or “the (Hegelian) system” – and emphasis on the subjective elements of engagement and “existential” choice.

The notion of \textit{Erlebnis}, stabilised in philosophical discourse only half a century after Fichte, with Hermann Lotze, and most clearly Wilhelm Dilthey – gave birth to an entire school (or several schools) of thought at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, collected under the term “life philosophy”. The best-known life-philosopher is Nietzsche, but many others joined this kind of reasoning, or criticized reasoning in a particular manner. The Neo-Kantian philosopher Rickert provided a critical account of these tendencies already in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{94} In one sense, despite his scornful attitude to some of the terminology,\textsuperscript{95} Heidegger might be classified as the last great life-philosopher.

The immediacy of \textit{Erlebnisse}, and therefore their unavailability to discursive reasoning, including negation, testing etc., became the fundamen of later aesthetic philosophy in two ways,
most clearly presented by Dilthey at the end of the 19th century. In this way it was also, indirectly, the fundament of much of cultural policy, although factors like the glory and representation of nations was more fundamental. One aspect of this role for cultural policy was the view of the production of works of art (we might say cultural products), which were intimately linked to the immediate and indubitable lived experiences, Erlebnisse, of the artist. The relationship to Neo-Platonic theories of inspiration and emanation is a canonical description in most aesthetic manuals.

But the other side of the coin is the reception of a work of art, which was identified with, not some objective property of beauty or harmony of the object of art, but rather with its capacity to produce an Erlebnis in the observer, viewer, listener. The notion of “beauty” was largely reinterpreted into a kind of dialogical notion, involving the viewer/listener etc. We are all familiar with the more radical formula of this view: “the work of art resides in the eye of the spectator”.

This focus on the “lived experience” of the “consumer”, is, at least rhetorically, the base for the economic discourse involving “partakers” in works of cultural production today, in contemporary discussions on aesthetical reception and the notion of cultural production as extended into “experience industry” or “creative industries”.

The emphasis on Erlebnis as a basic factor on the production side is still very alive, too, despite the fact that there seems to be a kind of contradiction if one accepts the more radical view of (visual?) art in contemporary art circles that “the work of (visual) art is in the eyes of the viewer”. Nevertheless, the artist as the selected, inspired creator, having exceptional gifts, and rights, is still a fundament in most discourse on arts, arts policies and art criticism, and clearly, in the philosophy of art. Even in those currents where the artist is regarded as a kind of spokesman for underprivileged groups or as being in the service of political resistance or reform, the status of a selected person, whose experiences are exceptional, having in some manner to be expressed, as a “surplus” of his or her Erlebnis, is quite present.

Cultural production: power, policy, politics

THE CONCEPT OF POWER

Power and will

The concept of power is an absurdity, as if there were only one concept of power.

The notion of power does not exist, just as little as there exists one notion of culture, of production.

This is a skeptical – or “philosophical” – view.

But there might be an opposite view as well, to say that power is an example of the basic categories, or notions, or predicaments (literally, in Aristotle, κατηγορουμένα), that are in a particular sense “inevitable” whenever you talk about human action (or perhaps animal action in general). This may be explicated in several ways. One is that it is tantamount to saying that we have to begin somewhere; our language, or even more generally, our way of thinking, is linked in a “basic” way to some central concepts. Or, to use a second metaphor, some concepts are more “central” to our discourse (or some particular discourse) – or a “node” in discourse. A third manner is when Heidegger prefers to talk about “existentials” for the human being (Dasein), that is, those fundamental modes of being (acting) that are always there, as “aspects” or shades in the

---

96 Dilthey
very phenomenon of being-human, or “being-there”\(^{97}\). Finally, Kant specified some predicaments in his scheme of categories of/for experience – these are notions that are logically before experience (\textit{a priori}), and governing experience.

Reference to power is, in this view, included, implied or – best – presupposed, whenever we want to study or construct theories (that is, logically consistent systems or discourses of propositions) on human beings in a society. Metaphorically, also animals have power, but I would argue that this is, precisely, a metaphor, taken from the human realm. If cats eat mice, they have some power – they want to eat the mice. And the mice have less power – but since cats “do not know what they do” in a pregnant manner, the point in talking about their power is lost. Obviously this is a disputable issue – but, combining Kant’s way of talking about the free will as a “postulate to the practical reason”\(^{98}\) is another way of saying this: the discourse of power is tied to human reason, and human language. Other uses are derivative – or might simply be disregarded, although not discarded: our interest is here to study the \textit{human} predicaments or conditions.

Power then, in this analysis\(^99\), is linked to will, the “free” will – or the presupposition that human behaviour and human action is not entirely predictable, albeit it might well be possible to study human actions in general - that is, to predict, on a \textit{statistical} level, more or less accurately, human behaviour.

Will is more or less synonymous with having power to \textit{choose}, and to act according to this choice, individually and/or together with others.

But power is something more than will – obviously power has to to with the \textit{effects} of our willing. We all know that we can not do everything we want… Sometimes we do really fulfill our wishes, sometimes not.

So, a broad approach to the general notion of power in the human context might simply be: to be able to do what we want.

This last formula in one way reduces the notion of power to an even more basic level: the level of potentiality (being able), or possibility (of acting). We get onto the Aristotelian ontological dichotomy of potentiality and fulfilment (actuality) (\textit{icits – ύποκα τάθεσις}) - which specifies that there is a way to understand all existence or being from two different aspects. Parallels to this dichotomy, in a somewhat fuzzy way, are the notions of substance and accident, matter and form etc. A whole branch of logic (modal logic) has been constructed to lay out the implications of possibility, as well as related notions of more and less practical impact.

But it is not power as a logical category that interests us here, rather it is a more practical and political use – though a glance at the most general notion may be helpful.

Power might be said to be first of all a \textit{relative} or at least \textit{relational}\(^{100}\) notion - that is, nobody could have power, if there is nothing to have power over – and perhaps, more narrowly, nobody to have power over. To have power over \textit{things} (e.g. by ownership or use) is normally an undisputable way of applying the notion, but less focussed to the context of a study of social or cultural structures, which mainly examines relations between people.

\textbf{Theories of power}

Power in the diverse senses has given rise to more or less a whole discipline of scholarship, in the crossroads of political philosophy, political theory of an empirical nature (political science), political economy, ethics, history, history of ideas, discourse analysis and what have you. All these

\(^{97}\) Efforts of translating Heidegger’s particular terminology (in Being and Time) or even thought are to some extent always doomed to failure – though obviously also Heidegger’s texts must be subject to the understanding (and therefore “deconstruction”) of the reader.

\(^{98}\) Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Reclam 1966 p 209-10

\(^{99}\) one may even say transcendental analysis, that is, an analysis that does not aspire to be grounded in experience or taken from experience but presupposed to, or a condition for, experience…

\(^{100}\) A sharp distinction between relative and relational is made by among others the above mentioned Polish philosopher Kazimierz Twardowski (Ueber sogenannte relative Wahrheiten…)
branches of scholarly enterprise have ambitions to design theories of power, that is, systematic accounts, generalizing phenomena under a certain number of concepts and following logical rules. Other theorists have rather tended to take some intuitive notion of power for granted, adopting a more descriptive kind of analytical study, where a very general predicament of power is an overarching model of understanding or a light shed over the entire presentation. I would classify Michel Foucault’s work as being of this kind. Foucault has, to my mind, not suggested a general theory of power, or a definition of the notion of power. Whether he treats madness, punishment or sexuality, or the Order of Things, the gist of his readings of history (mostly texts, but also other remains or traces, like images, buildings, rituals, customs etc.) is the manner of ruling, or power, underlying or implied (in a rather “baroque”, literal sense, rather than a formal logical sense) in discourses, that is, ways of talking, thinking, and ruling – (a ruler is a tool for a designer or a carpenter to make lines straight) - in these fields.  

Lukes

A handy survey of theories of power in political science and sociology was provided, already rather long ago, by the British sociologist Steven Lukes. Lukes distinguishes between one-, two- and three-dimensional theories of power.

One-dimensional theories (such as those of Robert A. Dahl and Talcott Parsons) are those that say that power is something exerted in explicit or external actions. This kind of theories is said to be “pluralist” in the sense of power being the capacity of an individual to make other persons do things that they would not otherwise have done.

Two-dimensional theories also include omissions, not only explicit actions. Bachrach and Baratz are cited by Lukes as advocating this kind of theory. Thus influence, constraint, authority, force and manipulations are included in this account of power relations.

Three-dimensional theories (advocated by Lukes himself) also include structures in power relations: institutions, decision-making, control over the political agenda, latent and open conflicts are among those structures. In this kind of theory also a distinction between “real” and “subjective” (lived or conscious) interests is presupposed. Lukes has Marxian inspirations, but obviously Foucault’s understanding is close as well.

Arendt

Lukes also mentions Hannah Arendt’s theory of power, but does not integrate it into his general framework. The problem is that Arendt refuses to include violence in the sphere of power. To Arendt power is precisely the capacity not to use violence for the attainment of a goal. Furthermore, power is always collective – in Arendt’s understanding power means “to be empowered” by a certain number of people to act in their names. Arendt’s notion (to which also Talcott Parsons is close in many respects) thus includes features from both two- and three-dimensional theories.

Lukes criticizes both Arendt and Parsons for their positions of seeing power first of all as a capacity, not a relation – power is to Lukes always “power over”, not only “power to”. Lukes is clearly, here too, relating to Marxian theories of class – always relating two classes to each other: capitalists and proletarians, dominant and dominated. Power is, in logical terms, a binary predicate – not a quality. Arendt’s notion is related to Aristotle’s general notion of potentiality (δυναμις, dynamis).

---

101 Cf. for example the article written by Alain Gros in the dictionary “Universalis” on Foucault. Literature on Foucault is by now already abundant.
102 Lukes, Steven Power, a radical view Macmillan 1974.
103 Human Condition
104 R(x,y), not F(x), in formal logical notation.
Power and ownership

Power has a number of forms, even if you accept the idea that violence is not one of them. One form of power is having property: to own something is to have more or less exclusive power over it. As far as this applies to objects other than human beings the notion of power might be considered as a larger concept than previously described. Indirectly, however, also property is a social category, although mostly applied for non-human beings in our time. Ownership of human beings has been rejected in the last 200 years by modern societies. Ownership is fundamental to capitalist economy and to most social institutions in modern societies. Ownership might be individual or collective – intermediaries are perhaps the most common form – in companies, family enterprises etc. where exclusivity is considerably reduced for the individual owner. Social regulation often considerably reduces exclusivity of ownership. You are, for example, in most legislations not allowed to destroy your house, to kill your cattle or dog as you please etc. But still, although it is seldom an unrestricted right, ownership of property – material and immaterial – is more or less a holy principle of contemporary legal structure, being protected in constitutional legislation and inscribed into instruments of human rights.

Ownership is not only a form of power – in the literal sense of potentiality or possibility to produce or act. It is also a responsibility, in the crude sense that a loss of property does not always or even very often entitle you to reimbursement, unless you yourself have taken measures to insure your property. The risk of loss is no doubt one of sides of interest judged to be a driving force in capitalist market economies, the other side being the right of profiting from your property.

Ownership is one position on a scale of liberties concerning objects and structures of power. It brings rights with it – usually more wide-ranging than other forms of rights, such as the right to use (but not to sell, e.g. hiring), the right to use but not for any purpose (frequent in regulations on housing) etc. Ownership is a notion relative to the social and political context surrounding it. Ownership however has the general character of being “informal” in a specific sense: in distinction from for example a right to use (but not sell, such as renting or lease) ownership is a “wholesale” right (ein Pauschalrecht in a somewhat Germanized terminology). Having bought an object you are not bound by clauses in a contract: you may have (as in most societies for estate property) have to have your ownership registered in a public document, but from the moment of ownership being installed, you have a liberty of decision wider than in other forms of power or disposition.

One way of generalising a notion of ownership – or even replacing it, rather than regarding it as a special case of power being proposed in the sphere of cultural production, where ownership is often immaterial – has been the notion of control (right to take decisions). A model example of this use was the text preparing a (never adopted) directive for the European Union on media concentration. Ownership was there seen as one of several varieties of control over mass media, which were treated by the regulatory text. Other forms observed were

- financial control, for example by way of providing credits (without possessing shares),
- indirect control through deliveries of products essential for the functioning of a particular business,
- control over staff serving an enterprise – including love relations, family or friendship relations etc.

---

105 This might even be a way of defining a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for democracy – excluding thus both Athens in the Antiquity and the United States before 1865, France before 1848, etc. The notion of slavery, literally the ownership of a human being, is not unambiguous – apartheid, serfdom, legal racial discrimination as in the US until the 1960s, sweatshops, whether in Communist China, Malaysia, Bangladesh, exploitation of illegal work force in most parts of the world, including the US and all countries of the European Union, might also be termed slavery, as might legislation in most countries on the submission of women, making Switzerland undemocratic until the last decades of the 20th century.

106 Green Paper Pluralism and Media Concentration in the Internal Market. 23 December 1992 (COM (92) 480 final)
These kinds of control of, in this case, production resources, include or equal power relations.

Controls may be exerted under diverse forms and structures, observed, in a wider context, by way of the notions of discourse by Foucault, and the notions of cultural and social capital suggested by Bourdieu.

In these contexts control and power appear are inserted into a less individualistic framework, just as capital is relative to a value or currency system (that is, socially determined), which sets the conditions for its being calculated, exchanged, sold, accumulated, lost etc.

(Re)feudalisation, ownership and a network society

The relativisation of the notion of power might serve as a link to another of the cited key concepts in current descriptions of social change and restructuration of power, viz. Network, as noted central to the *magnum opus* of Manuel Castells. The principal difference between older forms of social organisations on one hand, and contemporary societies on the other, is said to be much less formalised and less institutionalised forms of management, cooperation and control, in general involving power relations. Actually, he “re-feudalisation” processes discussed below involve networks replacing older more institutionalised, centralised and statutory regulated political organisations (primarily national states). Medieval feudal systems were highly formalised and ritual networks, and despite the current rhetoric of “deregulation” – primarily at national levels - contemporary “deregulated” systems rather involve an increase of legal regulations – we live in a lawyers’ paradise. The simple explanation is that systems involving more independent actors always will involve more relations, having often to be regulated. The essence of a network is rather that the number of “nodes” of the system is greater than in a hierarchical system, thus providing for more ways of contacts and bypassing obstacles which may be more influential in hierarchical organisations. Networks may also remain stable, if sufficiently tight, without any formal regulations and thus more apt to “flexibility” (another current fashion-term), adaptive to sudden changes, exceptions, “customization” etc. Just as traditional orders (such as the Free Masons), networks may be dependent on a certain amount of hidden clauses, secrecy etc. Networks may determine social activities, and enhance or reduce the power of individuals and groups, independently of regulated decisions, or democratic procedures. They may, indeed, be much more stable than democratic procedures themselves, as exemplified by the immense role played by families and class structures in most democratic societies.

Democratic, just as undemocratic, societies have always been battlefields for struggles between formal organisational public structures, such as elected governments and parliaments on one hand, and private networks, institutions, capitals, groups on the other. Ultimately, the latter might in the end determine the functions of the formal structures. Nobody, or very few, demand today that private enterprise should be controlled by democratically elected structures, apart from very general legal frameworks. And, where such control was proclaimed to be extant, as in the earlier Soviet controlled areas, the entire public structure of “people’s democracy” had nothing to do with transparency or democratic control – on the contrary the entire capital and production resources under state ownership were, precisely, in the hands of some uncontrollable networks in the party and administrative structures. The centralisation of power in those structures would preclude the characterisation of them as having been “network societies”, although corruption and irregularities of the administrative systems also safeguarded some “flexibility”.

In actual democratic practice the control exercised over state-owned property adapts itself more to the rules of the privately controlled part of the economy than the reverse. The differences in management structures and transparency between Renault, Volkswagen, Vattenfall, the Swedish state-owned mines in Kiruna on one hand and Ford/Volvo, Eon and Boliden on the other, are hardly notable, had it not been for the profits (if any) being put into the state treasury instead of into private shareholders pockets. This again could lead our thoughts to a medieval
situation where the king was just one among several princes, albeit the “supreme” *primus inter pares*.

On the scholarly level, this reminds us of the need to transgress disciplinary borderlines – between economy, sociology and political science, as well as philosophy. Actually this is what was attempted by Marx, 150 years ago, some of the neo-classical economists\(^\text{107}\) as Walras, Pareto, Jevons and Veblen a hundred years ago (a number of them explicit Socialists, by the way) and is revived by Bourdieu, Castells and Foucault, today. On a more popular level, works such as Rifkin’s *Age of Access*\(^\text{108}\) reflect on the same change in economic production structure – to say that control over networks and flows is the determinant agent in business structure, rather than control over property, that is, ownership.

In a basic sense, the talk about power excludes a strict determinism – at least in its crudest forms, understanding determinism as the view that social behaviour excludes individual decisions, unpredictable on a non-statistical level. In terms of social science methodology a minimal dose of individual-oriented strategy is required – social systems are always unstable to some extent, in a peculiar sense to be developed in the following chapter.

\(^{107}\) I note, with some surprise, the terminological fusion between “neo-liberal” and “neo-classical” in some texts on economic theory – hopefully the section in the French encyclopedia *Universalis* under the heading of “Néo-liberalisme” is not a general use of language – as if the present vogue of market-transfers of social or public affairs could be traced or supported by neo-classics like Jevons.

\(^{108}\) Rifkin, *Age of Access*
Interdisciplinarity, media structure and knowledge, a reflexive or transcendental approach to the knowledge of cultural production

Media research and cultural research – a reflexive consideration

Reflection is in most scholarly discourse seen as a backbone of the profession. Theory might, in general, be regarded as the fruit of reflection over findings or data from research.

Reflexivity has in more recent times become a more precise notion, for example denoting one particular aspect of a hermeneutical approach to social theory (Giddens) – but first and foremost perhaps by Bourdieu’s and Foucault’s reconsiderations of problems of “foundations of knowledge”. Since Kant paved the way for a particular “revolutionary” view on philosophy as theory of knowledge (including scholarly knowledge, in the sciences, mathematics and other fields) in his “Critiques” of Reason, the idea of finding the foundations of a field of knowledge as a consequence of a process of analysing the structures of experience of any particular field has stayed in reflections on knowledge. The point in the “critical” exercise is not to generalize empirical data but to find an order for these data, prior, in a logical sense, to the data themselves.

Cultural research, social research, research into “civilisations” or “mentalities” (Norbert Elias, forerunners like the linguist Trubeckoj and today perhaps Huntingdon), discourses and other “ways of thinking” all seem to share one property, a weakness or a necessary condition (Bedingung) – choose the term of your liking. This condition or predicament is generally taken to distinguish the research into the human cultural sphere from that of the “natural” sphere. The intermediary sphere of “artificial” is sometimes included in the human, sometimes in the natural sphere: the dichotomy between nature and culture is jeopardized by a lot of phenomena that are “due to” human activities. For other animals than humans the problem does not arise: nobody suggests that the construction of ants’ nests or heaps is an “artificial” phenomenon. Nature, so we say, just “naturally” encompasses rather complex behaviour by animals, social organisation, systems of communication, even to some extent “talk”, such as used by apes, or perhaps even parrots or other birds.

The problem arises, seemingly, just for ourselves, the species of homo sapiens. Literally, it seems to arise with knowledge or rationality itself, that is, knowledge that in some sense deals with knowledge or has as its object of inquiry. Such knowledge – or phenomena that depend on, or are linked in a logically necessary way to, knowledge – is by necessity “reflexive”.

Reflexive might, incouously, mean “turning in loops”, explainable comfortably in usual feed-back terms, central to any kind of computational processes, as well as teleological (evolutionary, ecological, biological) explanatory models or epistemological rules. In this context, reflexive has however a more complex sense.

To speak of cultural science – in the “objective” sense of research into culture (which is of course also a cultural undertaking) – is in a specific way pretentious or contentious. The problems and solutions at hand have been dealt with by, in particular Wilhelm Dilthey and coined in the Neo-Kantian distinctions between “nomothetic” (law-setting) and “ideographic” (descriptive) research (Wissenschaft). This is to say that models, logical procedures and heuristic rules, systematic requirements etc. established in physics, chemistry, biology etc. – mostly in mathematical terms – do not constitute the only kind of way to establish systematic knowledge. Other methods of inquiry, non-reducible to physical, chemical etc. norms and rules, have to be recognized in a number of fields of knowledge.

109 For example new breeds of cattle, or any kind of genetically engineered products, might be possible to classify both as artifacts and natural objects.
As noted, this riddle is also there in mathematics. The philosophy of mathematics rarely situates mathematical knowledge in the sphere of nature, viz. as a natural science\textsuperscript{10}. Neither is mathematics generally regarded as an “art” (though “constructivism” might be taken to adopt some of this attitude), nor part of the “humanities” or social sciences.

Attempts have been made to absorb mathematics in the sphere of empirical or natural science\textsuperscript{11}: the rather powerful trend of “psychologism” in the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century (represented by Husserl in his early work “Philosophie der Arithmetik” 1894 - later “converted” and heavily criticized and killed off by Frege-Russell and Husserl himself) is a testimony to the non-obvious view on what has been indisputably labelled “science” for centuries. Equally, a rather wide-spread school of thought denies that its fundamental conditions could be understood without some reference to “subjectivity” – whether in the form of “collective” subjectivity as established by the construction of proofs, accumulated by the human community as a whole, or in the form of some more individual “intuitive” “lived experience” (Erlebnis) or insight into axioms, conclusions and proofs (cf. intuitionist logicians like Brouwer, Heyting, Martin-Löf, Prawitz, and others).

Since contemporary physical research, or natural science as a whole, as well as large areas of social research, such as econometrics, statistical sociology etc., is structured and expressed by mathematical theory and language, it is reasonable to assume that the enigmas and controversies surrounding the foundations of mathematics in some degree also influence other scientific endeavour. In other words the prima facie clear divide\textsuperscript{12} between human/social sciences and natural science is blurred.

There is, briefly, just no thing like the scientific method or set of rules. Certain very general ethical and practical norms and traditions are followed in the entire field of production of knowledge deserving the name of “science”. This is a matter both of internal regulations (contingent, historical, social, factual, cultural) and what might be termed “necessary” or external requirements – the notions of “logical” (Wittgenstein, logical positivism, large sectors of analytic philosophy), transcendental, a priori, or critical (Kantian, Neo-Kantian, phenomenological, and perhaps hermeneutical philosophy) have been used for these regulations or conditions.

The particular predicament of research, which is not directed towards (dealing with) natural phenomena, seems to be that this research tends to refer to its own conditions. Cultural research today includes studies of the history and sociology of research, of ideas, and knowledge (Mannheim, Scheler, Bloom and the Edinburgh school in general, together with Kusch, Foucault and numerous contemporary scholars), and in some degree also in research on the media. These latter act as necessary instruments for scientific research: the social community of research is linked to another social structure of publishing, communicating and regulating, mostly controlled by the academic community itself and intimately linked to its system of promotion, honours, teaching etc. (Cf. Bourdieu on the Academic Man). This is, on the other hand, inextricably connected to other sections of cultural production – sharing much of its social conditions and epistemological bases, and, above all, concrete materialisations for expression – in the media, whether books, periodicals, learned journals, or more popular forms as TV, radio, newspapers. Bourdieu, with some anger, discussed in his pamphlet “On Television” some of the connections between research and the media.

But also the research itself into the domain of the human life and conditions is doomed to reflect, in a way radically different from most natural science, (“cognitive science” being a possible exception provided it is, at least partly, taken to be a natural science), its own conditions. A historian is mostly forced to reflect on his own methods of research, reliability of sources in general and the possibility to “neutralise” himself as an observer (anachronism is a basic problem to

\textsuperscript{10} For a survey of diverse views on the “nature” of mathematics cf. Körner or, in an older tradition, Bertrand Russell 1920.

\textsuperscript{11} I do not know of any suggestion to regard mathematics as an empirical “cultural” or descriptive research area.

\textsuperscript{12} I repeat, unfortunately furthered by the frequent restriction in English, and French, of the word ‘science’ to the natural sciences and mathematics.
any historian). A linguist has to take care (Chomsky has been criticized in this respect), not to take his or her own categories of syntax, morphology or phonetics as indisputably universally applicable – or has to argue why this could be made, perhaps by reference to non-linguistic evidence (biological, psychological etc.) of a more embracing kind.

An anthropologist (cf. Winther Jørgensen) is even worse off: how could you pretend to be able to say something non-prejudicial about other cultures? The debates on Orientalism (Said), and post-colonial theory, as well as queer theory, bear witness to the pains of anthropology in this respect.

Similarly an art historian, literature theorist etc. are all – particularly in the period following Foucault’s successful move of putting “discourse analysis” at the centre of most studies of representations of views, philosophies, social customs, structures etc. – has to constantly return to or revert to her or his own conditions, prejudices, points of departure etc.

In one sense this is just a continuation of what Kant designed as the critique of reason – albeit that, presently, Kant’s distinction between “de jure” and “de facto” conditions for knowledge (reason or understanding) is blurred and systematically challenged.

It is clear that this whole “epochal” move of observing one’s own conditions of inquiry, in the collective as well as more individual sense, affects the sector of cultural production and in particular the media in a particular way. Cultural products, first of all media products, are in all essential ways bound to, or tied to, their order of production. Since Marx the discussion of the degree and nature of “dependence” of cultural products on the mode or structure of production has contained diverse proposals to suggest more or less direct lines of derivation from producer to products: “laws” of social dependence have been suggested, in analogy to natural laws (or for that matter economic laws).

Without subscribing to a simplified theory of dependence (base-superstructure etc.) it is clear that some context of dependence is there to be examined. You, as a producer, say something, express something, not by constraint (only) but also by your own interest (will) – an interest linked to your own personal and social situation (class, nation, ethnicity, language, religion, intelligence, knowledge etc.)

Cultural industry, media, experience economy: power and the political dilemma of cultural studies

Cultural production is involved in itself: it is “reflexive”. And, since values might be considered one of the central aspects of cultural production – depending of the range of the notion of culture - it is no wonder that some aspects of cultural research will present difficult and sensitive problems, of a political and even moral nature. One relevant example might be taken from the research school of cultural studies - a vast community of researchers today. Its inspiration lay in issues of power over cultural production, and it derives much of its energy from a protest against traditional scholarship, being devoted to products of the arts and to the cultural heritage, firstly by pointing to the social constraints of cultural production in the traditional arts, secondly by objecting to the conservatism of the canons of cultural production technology. Media-distributed cultural products have caused problems both to researchers and policy makers – Walter Benjamin’s famous paper on technology in relation to the arts in 1936 and his complicated relationship with Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt school on this issue demonstrated the dilemma present (but often hidden) in the academic, and political, discussion on culture, notably the arts and “popular culture”. The problem was discussed in an anthology on cultural studies,\textsuperscript{113} which led to indignant protests from many of those who associate themselves to the tradition of cultural studies.

Actually, the sensitivity, or/and the existence of a problem is to some extent paradoxical, and I will try to show how this could be the case. In doing so, the themes of “positioning” and “reflexivity” of research, and in particular research on cultural production are brought up.

\textsuperscript{113} Ferguson and Golding 1997.
One of the roots of the contradictory positions emerging in the debate is that the tradition of cultural studies in Britain has its origin in a politically left-wing-oriented protest movement against established power positions in society, generally in what is commonly referred to as “cultural life” as well as cultural policy, in the usual understandings of those terms, and, more specifically, against the inherited established aesthetical canons of taste and quality in art and culture.

The protest movement was mostly linked to a solidarity with the emergence of a "youth culture" (an aspect of generation and urbanism) and the more general revolt against established “elite” culture or "high" culture, traditional art concepts and art markets inherent in this culture, in favour of “popular” culture, whatever the definition given to this very ambiguous and broad notion.

The basic dilemma was that both youth culture and much of what is termed popular culture is also intimately tied to mass culture, that is, industrially produced culture products distributed by dominant media business companies, quite intimately dependent on commercial mechanisms, and capitalist power structures — difficult to conceptually and ideologically integrate into a broad “people’s culture”.

The situation appears as paradoxical, since the French tradition, which is the other main stream of thought of current cultural analysis, deriving from Foucault and Bourdieu, also focussed upon power relations, where the analysis of cultural production — developed into an analysis of discourses as such — is principally geared to a study of the role of “hegemonic” ways of thinking, (ruling, punishing, killing or letting alive…).

Bourdieu’s research effort was, as a whole, coloured by a kind of, sometimes mastered and hidden, sometimes open, resentment (or class hatred) against established patterns of cultural segregation, both in academic ruling figurations and in the arts.

Foucault, the philosopher, historian and psychologist, on the other hand was an uneasy and perhaps neurotic middle or even upper middle class man from a middle-sized French provincial town — some kind of outsider all his life because of his homosexuality, and mostly deviant political adherences, both as a member of the Communist party, and as a virulent anti-Communist, and, again, siding up with extreme left-wing movements after 1968. At the same time a man with a rather hedonistic profile, preserving some of his upper class manners and consumption habits, combining a strong tendency of historic relativism in philosophy with a rather strong faith in the possibility to judge over the quality of scientific research, better or weak…

Bourdieu, one of the few in his generation at the Super School of Ecole Nationale Supérieure, Rue d’Ulm in Paris who stayed outside of the Communist Party cell, perhaps because of his own, unusual in the French elite, modest background, also engaged in the political struggles of his time — against the last French colonial war in Algeria, and during his last years against the neoliberal ravages in the social area, nationally and globally. But he also joined a criticism of “leveling” of mass media, (mostly heard from conservative critics of cultural production) against "fast thinkers” in the television studios, the ”take-over” of ”journalism” in cultural production, to the detriment of solid knowledge and reflection.

Both these thinkers illustrate the particular sensitivity in some parts of cultural research, a fear of bringing up some issues, amidst a rather relentless demonstration of the relativity of dominant value structures.

The difficulty might roughly be expressed as follows, in three steps.

1. By and large cultural production has been studied — and indeed often considered in its own time (though this is a kind of discursive circle, evidently: the discourse is one side of power, the expression or practice of power, if this wording is allowed — after all power is potentiality, not practice?…) as the field of expression of the well-to-do, that of kings, sultans, bishops, abbots or the like: later on the wealthy merchants and other city rulers. In Habermas’s terms, a way of expression or “representation” of their power, social position and glory. Beauty has been (considered as having) its place in palaces, churches, mosques and gardens…
2. The new time, modernity, industrialisation, higher standard of living, longer life and life expectancy brought a radically different extended set of expressions at the disposition also of lower social strata in affluent societies in the industrialised world. Although still these groups, globally speaking, belong to the highest strata of social well-being, the levelling of classes, or rather the general rise of standards of living in affluent societies, (mostly preserving relative differences between social strata, and at times even increasing them, as today in the USA) has also opened the doors for quite new expressions, not hitherto anchored in the (relatively speaking) ruling classes or upper social strata.

3. At the same time precisely this new level of “popular” cultural expression in mass culture is controlled by the same (or some new) power groups, either from earlier elites groups or new ones – making sometimes huge profits from cultural production and from exploiting popular artists.

4. Thus solidarity with popular culture might bring with it the undesirable, for left-wing scholars, consequence of defending the interests of those social power nuclei which have replaced (or just integrated) older royal and noble power groups.

Now, in a way this complexity is not new to “post-modernity”. Peter Burke’s extraordinarily lucid study of cultural stratifications in Western Europe during “modernity” (that is the epoch which Foucault called “classical” – roughly 1600-1800) have shown the complications of the interplay between what might be termed “popular” culture and the culture of the higher classes, elites or simply well-to-do. One interesting feature of the interplay seems to have been that, while the culture of the lower strata (using “culture” in a sense which is not synonymous with “art” – mostly this term is likely to have been reserved precisely for the production of the affluent strata…) was open to the participation of the upper strata – the separation between the strata being a matter of a slow and gradual development over the centuries – the reverse does not seem to be the case. The lower strata were – with some exceptions, such as the luxury and richness of the churches, open to the general public - denied access to music, plays, literature, science and other more “advanced” or “higher” forms of cultural production. Just as today: the scholars of cultural studies of course participate in and like expressions of popular culture, but rarely the more exclusive and sophisticated – and mostly public sponsored – expressions of forms of cultural production find access to the public at large.

The new means of expression brought to the “people at large” in industrial forms – that is affordable to large groups of populations - are almost entirely linked to the media – at least during the break-through of what is today often termed as modernity – roughly the time following the First World War. The industrialisation of cultural production, by mass produced newspapers, literature, photography and film, radio and television and of late, digital media, broke down the walls of reserves for cultural production. This development is gradual, of course: the printing of books is a break-through already 500 years old – though this break-through did not really have its full effects until the end of the 19th century, when literacy became almost universal in Western societies and censorship became an exception rather than a rule in affluent societies.

The political dilemma of cultural study, in various schools of study linked to different political traditions and ideologies, outlined above is just one of several examples of the particularities of research into cultural and social life – and the difficulties arising from the interaction of cultural spheres (art, popular culture, scholarly research in this case) in each other. These difficulties do, as philosophers are satisfied to establish, associate to problems of an epistemological nature, as well as problems of an ethical and praxeological nature. Actually this circumstance, in the field of cultural production taken in the wider sense employed in this study, is also just one of several examples of the interplay of cultural spheres as such.

114 Burke
115 “Praxiology” is a term used by the Polish philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbinski (1965/1955) among others, for a research into the conditions and constraints of “good work”.
Cultural research and media work – the “archeological” dimension

Journalistic work might – just as all (scientific or non-scientific) research! – be viewed as “archaeology” – that is, finding the “origins” or “principles” (that is “ruling” orders - the Greek word arché, αρχη, might be translated both ways).

Archaeology might be given the following general specifications: it

1. looks for traces of events,
2. tells stories about these traces,
3. reconstructs them (at least in models and mental designs),
4. uses them for a purpose.

Archaeology sometimes also restores ruins, after having made excavations, digging into the traces of the past, or rather eliminating layers covering traces of the past. Excavations destroy the traces (a popular analogy might be the observer in quantum mechanics, as well as the observer in “participatory observation” in social science, cf. below), at the same time as they “document” them, by saving objects, making maps and pictures etc. This feature has inspired Jacques Derrida for his generalisation of “deconstruction” – to say, roughly, that all knowledge is knowledge of the past – but also that knowledge in a sense, just like an excavation, destroys the past. In modelling the past, reconstructing it, a “new past” is being established.

Sometimes ruins have to be restored several times, since further development of knowledge might arrive at new insights of “how it really was”, “wie es eigentlich gewesen” in Ranke’s famous dictum. Restoration is advanced reconstruction: we often do not have the original stones, and certainly not mortar, available but have to put new material in its place. It is important not to put too “modern” material in old ruins: many old ruins have been seriously damaged by cement and have later to be repaired by “authentic” materials.

Now this is the fate of not only archaeology in the concrete sense, but also – as is Derrida’s point - of immaterial production or reproduction of the past.

A most illustrative example, on the difficulties besetting reconstruction, deconstruction and restoration is the discussion on early music. There both “material” (sound is matter) and “immaterial” objects are involved, since a musical work is immaterial, exemplified in sounding material performances. The “authenticity” of new performances of earlier (non-recorded) music is often contested: “we could never know how Bach really sounded”, and furthermore contrasted against the inherent or inner value of new interpretations, always being “subjective reconstructions”. Still, also in this field the discovery or reconstruction of old material, such as instruments, strings, scores or autographs of music constantly necessitates the revision of older theories – and the rejection of some interpretations or performances/reconstructions as inaccurate, and thus suggesting evaluation of the “truth” in an artistic sense of earlier performances.

The rapidity of new trends often based on new findings even justifies a saying that few things become so quickly old-fashioned as fashionable, up-dated, interpretations of old music…. 

---

116 Again, the inspirer of this perspective is, of course, Foucault in his *Archéologie de savoir* from 1968 – though Foucault himself had a rich history to use and to reconstruct (sic!), at least from Hegel and Marx as well as German historicism, in Dilthey and onwards. Archaeology might, as many human endeavours be regarded 1) as an undertaking or process, 2) as a structure or institution involved or organising this process – it is the latter perspective which dominates here.

117 – cf P1 Sveriges Radio 21/6 2005, emission in the series World of Science, (Världens värld) on the ruins of Vreta Convent in Sweden having to be re-restored, since the first restoration used mortar (KC, Calcium Cement) which destroys itself, thus also ruins the ruin. The ruin had to be re-repaired by “authentic” means, using the correct, old-fashioned mortar. Viollet-le-Duc in France and Helgo Zettervall in Sweden are famous/notorious for their violent and “untimely” restorations/reconstructions of the past. Today we know better - do we?, yes we do! - the medieval Uppsala Cathedral in Sweden has been restored recently - to preserve Zettervall’s 19th C Neo-Gothicisation of the Gothic past… Destruction of the reconstruction has been avoided, this time.
The use of history
The point in digging up early music scores and sources is for most people not a scholarly interest, but to use it: playing it and listening.

Several stages, perhaps in particular the last one, of archaeology are integrated into history. The word history is – in many Western languages at least - systematically ambiguous, both for the general use of the term and for its specifications (history of philosophy, history of art, history of economy, history of the world, history of animals…). One very crude demarcation might be made along the following line:

History is 1) past events 2) stories about past events = “tales”.

Archaeology in one sense is a tool for history, in the second category of senses. In this second category both stories and stories about stories are included – history of physics is obviously not a history of the nature, physis, but the history of the science about nature, a “tale” which is termed physics. Science (in the widest sense of the term) is a story about something, a well-ordered and logical story, hopefully, but still a narrative.

Archaeology traces remainders and establishes a context – it might also use texts as remainders or traces (as Foucault most brilliantly did) – but it has, just as a law court, a freer attitude: everything is allowed as evidence for a proof, buildings, objects, customs, myths, traditions, expressions. Sometimes a demarcation is, however, drawn between archaeology and history, reserving the field of history for texts only – that is, leaving illiterate cultures to archaeology. Foucault, obviously, challenges this demarcation, extending the field of archaeology to texts but also including texts into a social and cultural context, a “discourse”. On the most abstract level the discourse also includes “ways of thinking”, up to and in some degree also encompassing logic: this is where the discussion becomes really hot118.

Now archaeology is – as all scientific production and products – there for at least two reasons: to still our curiosity, and to be employed for some more “useful” purpose, accepting, provisionally at least, a distinction between playing, entertainment on one hand and utility on the other.

In at least two ways this distinction is being seriously challenged today: homo ludens comes into the focus of the utility sphere, just as luxury trade was in the focus of much of historical economic development, from spices, gold and silk, to tea, coffee and other drugs. In present “experience economy”, archaeology together with the presentation, use and exploitation of monuments (memories) and sites are at the focus of the world’s fastest developing industry, that is, tourism and travel. Similarly history, and the related genres of historical fiction or historical stories are best-selling genres, in screen plays, computer games, as well as traditional literature in many countries, for adults as well as children.

In that particular form of cultural production, which we call journalism, most of the features brought up above also apply.

Journalism is – using the term in the wider sense in which not only the professional group of journalists is included, but most contributors to media production – also a trade where tracing the past and telling stories about the past is the basic ingredient, though the past is a recent past. Journalists could not be satisfied only with listening to what people say and reading texts. Just as archeologists they have to be there, at least in the last resort. The reconstruction of an event – in the metaphorical sense of presenting the event afterwards - is the final output of the journalistic news work. Other kinds of journalism, such as commentary, reviews etc. mostly build upon the news work underneath. You have to be there, ultimately – to “experience” the real thing.

118 The dispute on psychologism, anthropologism, empiricism etc. in logic and mathematics, from Frege and Russell and onwards is one part of this controversy.
Post-modernity and experience economy

In our time, though with a strong note of reservation, industrialisation is said to have reached its apex or even come to its end: post-modernity is proclaimed. For cultural production two consequences might be discerned:

1. Post-modernity itself is described as a change of the relation between material and cultural production. From now on cultural production might rightfully be regarded as the “base” of material production, not the reverse, as suggested by dialectical materialism. We are in the Reign of Mind….Of course this is a very crude simplification; doubt should in general be cast over this kind of dichotomy in general…

2. Cultural production is itself becoming in one sense de-industrialized, less standardized. The term “customization” might express this development, implying that the standardization and mass-production, which are at the centre of industrial production is modified by diverse forms of adaptation devices to serve the demands of individual or groups of customers. The neurotic pace of new production of new car models or mobile telephones, with all kinds of (extra-costly, of course) choices for the individual clients may serve as examples – in an economy where the number of US producers of automobiles has been reduced to 2 or 3, bringing concentration closer to monopoly. Customization is of course made possible for industrial production by the use of computer technology but the phenomenon as such might serve as a demarcation line between an industrial and post-industrial economy – as pointed out in the already mentioned widely 119 cited book by management consultants Pine and Gilmore on the “experience economy”. The examples from cultural production are abundant. Although much complaint is brought forward from cultural elites against mass tourism, cultural tourism, large-scale entertainment sites, Disneyfication and so forth, it seems clear that precisely the tendency of customization and “experience trade” marks a step away from standardised industrial production in the cultural area. The most typical example might be cultural tourism. Tourism as such is often said to be the world’s largest economic sector120 today, but although much tourism is still mostly concentrated on “pure recreation” like bathing, entertainment and the like, the ingredients of “experience” of monuments and cultural sites is mushrooming. Museums of innumerable cultural and natural aspects of the universe develop, presentations of monuments and sites are often given in the form of some, more or less professional, people performing, for a select group of visitors, aspects of historical life-forms etc.

In these performances, though media are frequently used, the core is mostly an aspiration for “authenticity” – old clothes are used, monuments restored, old techniques employed etc. In this way authenticity is thought to be better presented (indeed: performed) than simply by texts or images. At the same time this includes a kind of escape from mass production and media – albeit mass-produced in a somewhat “customised” form.

The move from a more traditional mass-produced culture is itself made possible by digital technology – customisation has become an aspect of mass production.

This also brings with it a new feature of cultural production (albeit a feature with ancient roots…) By and large this development could be described as a step backwards as well as progress, depending on whether you see it from the point of view of producers (creators) or users (consumers). Examples from the industry and video production illustrate that “anyone” (in the affluent societies) could produce and mass-distribute music, films etc. This challenges a number of established distinctions:

---

119 A book, which for much of its general aspects, is grossly over-estimated.

120 It might be advisable to avoid in this context the English ambiguity of the term “industry”, referring both to economic sectors in general – including non-industrialised sectors - and to the specific industrial sectors.
1) The demarcation line between “original” and “copy” is blurred in an epoch where the “original” might be a record. nobody would say that Mozart’s music performed 200 years after his death by a huge contemporary symphony orchestra, on instruments that did not exist in Mozart’s time, is a “cover”.

2) The distinction between “amateur” and professional creator is blurred, since new ways of distribution and performance may circumvent established commercial and institutional channels

3) The distinction between producer and user is challenged by “open-code” production on diverse levels of the processes involved, facilitating the change of the “original” according to the preferences of the “user” or “consumer” of the “work”. In visual art the trend of reworking other artists’ works is established, just as for Bach, Bellman\footnote{121} and his contemporaries it was evident to borrow from one’s own works and those of others.

Industrial cultural production has been dominated by commercial interests, just as industrial production in general, in most parts of the world. Actually “cultural policy” has been set up precisely to draw some demarcation lines between what is being regarded as necessary to exempt from market mechanism, that is supply and demand, purchase and sale and other forms of cultural production.

The dominant “popular”\footnote{122} cultural production on the other hand – consists basically of cultural production, which is not subject to interventions of public cultural policy in the narrow sense. Business interests, albeit including some families or individuals with a genuine interest in cultural production, tend to come under the control and growing concentration of ownership of large business groups, increasingly tightly linked to general business interests (automobiles, electric equipment, arms, drugs like alcoholic liquors and tobacco, etc.) both as direct owners or share-holders and sponsors etc.

Mass production is also cheap production, although in varying degrees from industry to industry – the ”first-copy cost” is mostly very high in cultural production (the “original”) – but the cost of later copies might go down to zero, as is the case for much of television and radio – normally there is a space for more viewers and listeners for each channel, without increasing the cost of production or distribution. For the consumer this means that many could afford bying the products, and that, at least in theory, competition between producers for market shares increases. In those sectors where it is not possible to transform a process into mass production, profits and competition are likely to play a more reduced role – “there is space for everyone in the market”. By and large this was the structure of artisans and guild-organized production. In many cases this is still the case for cultural production – such as concerts of classical music, theatre plays etc.

Technology, originals and customization

Digitization brings problems also to producers. Since customization means using new technology for mass produced services or goods, the economic impact of mass production is to some extent reduced – the physical control over the production machinery is not as crucial as before, and therefore control of markets becomes less stable. Also, technology has in some degree reduced economic barriers to market entry, since mass production is less dependent on physical machinery and many kinds of production stages are systematically split up.

The Internet and new technologies of file sharing systems in recorded music and video are a particularly good illustration of this development. Everyone has nowadays – in the affluent world – a possibility to download a CD record into a computer and an MP3 player or burn a

\footnote{121}{Bellman is a Swedish poet and song writer from the end of the 18th C.}
\footnote{122}{’Popular culture’ – a systematically ambiguous notion! Cf. below foot-note 124.}
DVD, thus producing and copying with the highest technical quality. Big producers fight as lions to uphold their control of the market – mobilising regulators and legal systems to defend copyright systems and fight “piracy”, while obviously still, as a matter of principle, subscribing to the principles of “free flow of information”, freedom of research etc. It is difficult to forecast where the battle will end – but so far small producers, and above all distributors outside the big oligopolies of music industries, particularly individual collectors and just ordinary people, have been able to round obstacles, establishing a kind of “free gift market” beside the ordinary commercial market, and some intermediate forms of transactions, such as voluntary payment etc. Downloads without consent of copyrighted material has been made criminal in the European Union, but signs are clear that legislators will not be able to prosecute all the millions of teen-agers who do not obey this law.

This does in no way mean that the big media industries have already lost the battle – the ordinary market system actors still remain very powerful. To be able to burn a CD or a DVD does not mean that you have accessed the world market, even if, theoretically, everyone equipped with a computer could read your site and download your product. Robert McChesney draws a parallel to ordinary paper: even if you are quite entitled to, and could, physically and for all practical purposes, shout and show a paper with some politically incorrect message in Broadway in NY, this does not mean that you have made any impact on the media power structure… And the Internet is often, quite correctly, thought of as a kind of market place or forum, or public space – but everyone knows that this does not give any entrant to the space power over this space.

"Garage rock bands” were given the opportunity to record their music, and, within their private economic resource range, buy equipment, and to some extent reach out to a wider audience, playing in pubs etc. For most of these people, however, the dreams of getting really “big” do not come true – instead the pleasure of playing one’s own music (or covers) motivates the expenses from private purses.

On the whole, music industry, and other cultural industries, have been instrumental in reducing much of traditional “hand-made” art and culture to a marginal phenomenon – at least in economic terms. “Popular culture” has, in the economic sense, displaced traditional art – both production and consumption - away from the centre of cultural power to a peripheral, albeit still prestigious (heavily loaded with cultural capital, in Bourdieu’s terms) position.

Moreover, cultural practices associated to youth are rarely classified among the fine arts – instead this kind of practice is often judged on quite different criteria than the ”quality” of its content along traditional criteria. Instead it is the expressivity, or force, as a representative, authentic or genuine product of a group in society, which is being studied and valued. Youth culture has also became a model for ”cultural studies” – where the notions of art and culture are linked to a more anthropological aspect or communicative function of the production, rather than the “aesthetic” function associated to traditional studies of art and art criticism. Also, as remarked, the political (popular versus elite) aspect is central, the traditional forms of art being associated to the upper social strata, and their value accordingly – notably by the “critical” research schools - relativised to these strata.

In addition, as suggested above, large parts of the cultural studies tradition also reject the idea that “consumption” of cultural products should be regarded as entirely distinct from production. The choices of music listened to, books bought, magazines read or TV-series watched are viewed as an expression of a particular cultural attitude, that is, a representation, use or reproduction of a cultural value. Again, youth culture is the model – “identification” in youth culture is often tied to the kind of recorded music listened to, bought or in some cases produced.

123 McChesney
124 Popular culture: 1) the People’s (not the elite’s) culture 2) the culture that is practiced by a wide range of people, rich, poor, intelligent,of diverse classes. 3) the culture of our forefathers, “folk” culture, mostly from the agricultural sector, 4) commercial culture.
The generalised use of the notion of “reading” as an active selective process in recent hermeneutic and deconstructionist theories (for example by Derrida) paves the way for this kind of interpretation. Whatever criticism, that might be – quite rightly so – launched against standardised mass culture or the power structures of cultural industries (since Adorno and Horkheimer, for example) – the products of this culture are preferred by most people. And the explanation of this phenomenon as a pure manipulation, as is the tenet of Adorno-Horkheimer’s criticism, is difficult to swallow wholesale, in view of the fact that a purchase after all is a voluntary act. A genuine respect for the choices and will of individual people, whatever their social status or educational levels are, is not compatible with such an attitude held by scholars. Actually the recognition of consumption patterns as forms of expression on a cultural level seems to be well founded in a more general philosophical outlook on human action and dignity\(^{125}\).

The dilemma in cultural research has been outlined above already, in connexion with the cultural studies approach, and inserted into a general perspective of reflexivity. It could be formulated from different perspectives, one “left” and one “right” actually – one gets a feeling of “\(\text{les extrêmes se touchent}\)”.

The dilemma was as such not very well construed by Adorno and Horkheimer, and it still permeates the methodological nucleus of cultural research. Borrowing, again, a term from Bourdieu it might be expressed as a multi-faceted problem of “positioning” cultural production, in this case academic research and university institutions.

The dilemma might crudely be re-cast as a series of arguments and counter-arguments, as follows:

**Pro**

Cultural studies deal with the expression, use, consumption, representation and production of diverse symbolic content, and goods carrying this content, in diverse social groups, from diverse educational backgrounds, age groups, economic positions etc.

**Contra 1**

Since this content is mostly produced by an industry controlled by elite corporate commercial power centres and interests, intimately linked to the economically, politically and socially dominating groups in Western societies (first and foremost in the USA), the products used in the popular cultural sphere inevitably cater for the interests of these groups, within the complex pattern of selling to the largest groups as possible. Markets and the consumers are geared as much as possible to suit the interests of the producers, without however losing the grip of the market, founded on the appeal to a large number of clients. It is impossible or very difficult to assess the role of the individual client in influencing the market structure.

**Contra 2**

A critical study of the cultural production fields must take into account the mechanisms of power ruling the markets and the entire sector of cultural life (also the subvention systems of cultural policy, etc.).

**Contra 3 = Pro?**

On the other hand, the respect for the choices of cultural products of individuals and groups in diverse social positions requires also a respect – a kind of “neutrality” in view of these products: the criticism of these products from whatever a quality point of view that might be presented is rapidly loosing its relevance. We simply have, at least at a basic level, accept these choices as authentic cultural expressions.

**Contra 4**

It would, again, be naïve, however not to pay regard to the power of economic actors, of marketing methods and publicity in “creating a demand” for a product, that might actually be far from “representative” of, let us say, a popular need, a politically genuine requirement or a “good taste” from a more “objective” point of view (if such should be). The attitude of “neutrality” or respect for the choices of the “people at

\(^{125}\) In Benjamin’s spirit – where the act and customs of purchase is the foundation to the study of the Parisian passages – some Swedish cultural study scholars (Fornäs, Bjurström) have performed a large study of the culture of consumption in a commercial centre (a “passage”) of Stockholm.
large” might turn out to be a political surrender to powerful economic interests – so much the worse if this surrender is not only prevalent in the media controlled by these interests but also reaches in to the strongholds of academic institutions.

A dilemma, if genuine, has not a solution: whatever one does or holds has negative consequences.

In sum: For cultural research the relation to power is difficult to master. The study of mass culture, youth culture, experience industry - does that presuppose a kind of acceptance of what used to be called the ”privilege of formulating problems” of the ruling elites – or to speak the language of cultural ruling power groups?

And, if this is too difficult, where does this lead to, in relation to the rebellion which once distinguished cultural studies or cultural research in a more general sense from ancient ethnology or the humanities?

Cultural research – in accordance with the Piper’s Principle outlined above - seems, in sum, to need a special vigilance as to its own conditions, so as to avoid the danger of becoming a “disciplined discipline”.

This is not a study of the history of research, but taking some steps in the history of cultural research may help in pointing at the kind of self-reflexivity of this kind of research. As for media and communication studies some interesting overviews have been presented, such as that provided by Armand and Michele Mattelart. This history in many aspects mirrors the problems encountered in cultural research as a whole.

The origin of media studies is commonly located to the US; Walter Lippmann is often referred to as its father. He was himself both a media worker and a researcher, though his principal function was that of a publisher and journalist – starting out as a propaganda maker in the First World War. In the age of positivism, from the 1930s in social science, a firm belief in the “neutrality” and distantiation of research from its object, subscribed to by research scholars like Lazarsfeld and Berelson, and later also Krippendorff, rather ignored the kind of “loops” in cultural research indicated above. Surveys, quantitative studies, usually accompanied by an “apolitical” attitude – Lazarsfeld himself referred to (parts of) research as a kind of “administrative” undertaking. “Content analysis” was applied to vast studies of material, which was coded, and documented.

A critical and semiotic turn was proposed for products of cultural work by “semiologists” like Roland Barthes, followed by a entire schools of students of popular culture and sign systems of various nature. The background of this tradition was interpretation of texts, and philosophico-linguistic analyses.

In the wake of critical theory inaugurated by the Frankfurt school, and in particular Adorno and Horkheimer, spending wartime in the US, confronted by popular and media culture, studies of media and other forms of cultural production focussed on the power relations in the cultural field. The debates on a new media and communication order in Unesco were inspired by studies of Herbert S. Schiller and supported and later both by European critics and US media scholars and practitioners like Ben Bagdikian. The international study performed by the MacBride Commission gave rise to widespread political controversies – but also to new reflection on the role of “cultural imperialism” in the era of increased international communication and intense exchange of information.

Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman and McChesney inaugurated a new era of radical criticism of US communication policies in the perspective of USA foreign policy actions and wars. This radical criticism in many ways turned upside down the tradition in United States communication studies – scrutinising the media from a political angle, rather than the kind of quantitative and statistical, also industry-oriented approach, introduced in the earlier US tradition. The Chomsky tradition joins in – together with Adorno and Horkheimer - to the kind of critical reflective standpoint, formulated and discussed explicitly by Bourdieu.
Benjamin’s role as a precursor to cultural studies, diverging from the Adorno-Horkheimer position, did not really concern the issue of reflexivity, but reflexivity, from a historical point of view, was the main tenet of Foucault’s work. Foucault himself seems not to have linked his philosophical historicism to a deeper reflection on his own conditions. As a radical critic of any conception of “essences” in social and cultural contexts, he would be expected to scrutinise any, including his own, pretensions of objectivity in research, but did so surprisingly little\textsuperscript{126}.

Still, the discipline inaugurated by Foucault, viz. discourse analysis \textsuperscript{127}, might be said to take reflexivity as its principal subject of discussion, focussing on cultural production in a wide sense, including both normative systems of justice and other social structures, scientific production, the arts, the media etc. In this sense Foucault’s effort was an explication of the problem of reflexivity, and of the particular predicament of cultural research/research on culture. He did, as mentioned, have several predecessors, such as Elias and Cassirer, and the battle on “anthropologism” (psychologism, historicism) involving Husserl and Frege treated some of the same difficulties.

Finally: it would be vain to believe that the battle is over – research on culture will remain a cultural enterprise, just as all other research, but it remains different from most other sciences\textsuperscript{128}, in taking itself as an object.

**Structure and content of cultural production**

Cultural production might be divided into a number of sub-fields. Bourdieu is not very consistent in his distinctions and the delimitation of one “field” from another is as difficult as the delimitation of “discourses” in discourse analytic theories, from Foucault and onwards. Systems analysis has had a more ambitious project in this respect – the differentiation of one system from another should, at least theoretically, be possible by some more or less logical operations, in terms of causal and/or statistical correlations. Foucault suggests a systematic (at least in his later period) overlapping of discourses, and Bourdieu does not seem to bother very much about a strict borderline between fields. A field is by definition something that is not too clearly defined or delimited.

As suggested above, the notion of structure purveys a stronger pretension of being exact. While the notion is customarily not very controversial as far as media are concerned, to speak of “cultural structure” might be a strange phrase. It seems to be slightly tautologous, since culture is always a social network, or structure. On the other hand, the production of cultural goods or services is obviously something that might be modelled, and thus presented as an ordered structure just like any other economic structure. And cultural production looks very different in different societies – a difference which could be accounted for in general terms, employing the notion of structure to describe relations, mapping actors etc.

Concretely, in cultural policies, the classical opposition between “matter” or “content” and “form” or “structure” is often used – “structure” being opposed to “content”. A parallel distinction is sometimes that between “outer” or external and “internal” /inner. Political interventions, such as subventions, regulations etc. are normally, in democratic societies, supposed to concern only the structure of media and other cultural products – that is, not “what is written och said”. There are exceptions – rather frequent - from this rule: the regulation of public television and radio and generally speaking, media, normally includes issues of “content”, for example the categories of programmes to be included for obtaining licences etc. Depiction of violence, pornography, as well as libel are also normally subject to legal regulation.

\textsuperscript{126} As brilliantly analysed by Marianne Winther Jørgensen from a point of view of anthropology.
\textsuperscript{127} Again cf. Winther Jørgensen together with Louise Phillips
\textsuperscript{128} not all scholarly undertakings though, ”science of science”, in the shape of sociology of science, philosophy of science or history of science will share the same fate. Perhaps also pure logic and theory of the foundations of logic and mathematics belong to this category. Husserl suggested the term “transcendental” logic for this investigation.
Also interventions into the structure are controversial, but more widely accepted (cf. the discussions in the Council of Europe and the Recommendation on measures to promote pluralism in the media 129).

Taking a number of reservations into account, there seems to be a kind of possible consensus, albeit with exceptions, as to an operative definition of the structure of cultural production, covering several of the fields that are enumerated by Bourdieu, or Cassirer, for example philosophy, scientific research, art, media, legal and normative systems. Tentatively this could be taken to include the following features.

The institutional framework, laid down in constitutions, regulations, agreements etc.
The physical infrastructure, such as machines, buildings, people, paper, broadcasting equipment, artistic materials, prisons etc.
“Ideal” or discursive structures, though, actually, a discourse might also be regarded as a kind of “content structure” which is internal and external at the same time, a “mental artefact” just like a computer programme, a language or a musical key or mode.

Most people would agree to include at least the following parameters in a description of a structure of cultural production, analogously to what was suggested for media structure above.

Kinds of media, including both media as “bases” for artistic expressions (“word”, “sound”, “image”) and media in the more traditional sense, like press, audio-visual media, cyberspace etc.
Number of elements in the respective structure, such as titles of journals, books, films etc. Economic actors like firms etc.
Relations between elements, such as those regarding control, influence and power
Properties of elements – descriptions of for example cultural products in terms of genres, like novels, symphonic music, etc.
Use and users of cultural products – in terms of consumption, “expressions of identity”, “entertainment”, “playing for pleasure”, “learning”, “research work”, “judging in legal procedures”, “praying” ....
Effects – which might be regarded as a special case of both use and relations – but is very often in media contexts studied as a separate heading – also including more social effects, that might not appropriately be termed “use”.

The borderline between these parameters is arbitrary, to a certain degree.

For example, descriptive studies of use and users (such as in cultural studies) will approach what will be termed studies of content rather than of structure. However, when it comes to political decision-making and regulation of the cultural sector arbitrariness is not really tolerable – it might endanger freedom of expression and information. Thus, whether it is defensible in strict logical terms or not, an operational definition of structure seems required for regulatory purposes, since a demarcation line between structure and content is imposed for reasons of freedom of expression. The definition chosen will replace more intuitive understandings of a structure. It will not, however, for research purposes define a precise set of methods: actually a whole gamut of methods, from rather crude statistics to intricate analyses of discourses of individual or collective phenomena in the cultural production field will be mustered.

---

129 Cf. references.
Power and discourse: a Foucauldian and anti-Foucauldian perspective

Foucault’s perspective, as a philosopher, historian of ideas and designer of a new subject of study, discourse analysis - that of power - might be seen as an alternative to “idealist” perspectives where actions in general are traced to and described in terms of intentions or, more generally\textsuperscript{130}, “intentional acts”, mental acts or the like. Power is a notion rooted more in the structure of action than in intentionality or mental universes. Power, as a potential feature, or disposition, is often invisible, and even imperceptible – since it is a structural set-up, not necessarily paid attention to by those who are involved in the interplay of power, either as master or as slave…

Discourse is, in the Foucauldian sense, both something said and “unsaid”, the latter including unspoken, implicit presuppositions, assumptions, categories, classifications or, simply, the way we (or they) think or act meaningfully. In one sense it is something objective, not included in the personal or individual intentional act, except as the form given to it by other users of the same discourse. This explains why the individual, as a matter of principle, is never the “master” of the discourse, just as a speaker of a language is simply subject to the rules and vocabulary of that language. No language is private, Wittgenstein’s famous dictum, could also be applied to discourses. The establishment of a discourse, whether it be on punishment, sexuality or madness (to take Foucault’s own examples) is not something which you break down as a person, but which, even if you may observe it and criticise it, you are bound to comply with in order to express yourself, that is, communicate.

Discourses might, however, also be construed as particular clusters of intentionality. Crudely, this would say that, for example, I understand a phrase or an action, as something pronounced by another person, who in her or his turn has an understanding of other persons meaning this or that… The “indirect intentionality” is thus a matter of presupposing, taking for granted, in a way which relinquishes the power over the meaning to other people, or, indeed, discourses (languages, systems of meaning, rules of behaviour, norms, cultures etc.).\textsuperscript{131}

\textbf{The unifying perspective in research on cultural production}

The integration of media studies and cultural studies, at least since Benjamin, Raymond Williams, Barthes and other pioneers has to some scholars been controversial, in view of the fact that media studies, or media and communication research, have only recently won a dignity of a discipline, that is, as an independent field of study, liberated from sociology, political science, literary theory and history of literature etc. The admission to the rank of an academic discipline is a sign of recognition – not least since it determines job prospects and research funding. Typically, this integration of a wider cultural perspective met with some resistance from those who relied almost exclusively on quantitative empirical data.

Nevertheless, this integration is becoming gradually recognized within media studies themselves, judging from the adoption of cultural studies approaches in a growing number of research projects. The reverse is also valid: in the study of the arts, social sciences, the humanities and other academic fields, which may be broadly defined as “cultural sciences”, the insight is becoming more or less universal that cultural objects, or artifacts, could not be understood in separation of their processes of production or social context. Already the beginnings of a scholarly study of texts in the critical study of the biblical sources in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century demonstrated this dependence

\textsuperscript{130} ‘Intentions’ is ambiguous in the English language, from a strictly philosophical point of view: Husserl understood by intentions not at all only purposive acts, volitions or purposes, but every act (of “consciousness”) directed to an object other than the act itself.

\textsuperscript{131} I have exploited a lecture by professor Staffan Carlshamre in Stockholm June 2003 to suggest this four-tier approach to intentionality
– exegetes could not avoid investigation into the cultural and political environment of their authors.

The technical developments of media and communication structures of the last century crushed the idea (or, in some people, the hope) that creative work in the arts, science, education, and, consequently, political systems, could be separated from the new “noosphere”. McLuhan may have overstated his message, but this overstatement made clear the impossibility of investigating “the reign of mind” in separation from the communication structure, as defined above. This insight may have been slow in gaining acceptance in academic fora, for good reasons, since scholarly work is by necessity conservative, building on the experience of others, but Benjamin’s recognition of the new era in the study of art marked a new obligation for any research effort on cultural phenomena, in practically any kind of definition.

One might, in a philosophical sense, regard this insight as a second Kantian-Copernican revolution: the media play a role, intertwined with cultural discourses (in a Foucauldian sense), similar to Kant’s system of “categories of understanding”. The way of expression, speaking, understanding is, in a precise sense, today mediated – not only by the medium of writing and pictures, graphic reproductions, etc. already existing in Kant’s time, but by a whole extended spectrum of means of expression, information and understanding. It is perhaps not possible to posit the structure of media on exactly the same epistemological level as Kant’s categories of understanding, but investigation into the structure of symbolic forms (following the pioneering work 80 years ago by Cassirer) must be grounded in the patterns of expression and understanding, which, in contemporary, - “modern” or “post-modern” - societies reside in the media structure.

Concrete social contexts add reasons for this amalgamation of the study of cultural and media fields to the evidence already advanced on a theoretical level.

**Social context - labour conditions**

One such reason is the labour conditions of some fields of cultural production. Artists have, in most of the traditional Western societies (the Communist industrialised states did to a certain degree adopt a different policy), a socially precarious position. A small minority of them have enjoyed a relative security, or in rare cases even wealth, by the grace of kings, clergy, or other upper sections of society, and today market mechanisms. The rest of them have, however, had to support themselves, either on a small market, or, perhaps most commonly, by exercising another profession. Another sector of cultural production, viz. scholarly life, on the other hand, was, and is still, more protected, in virtue of its tight links with the church or the state, but also there the conditions of production differ from those of the ordinary material production, services or commerce, mostly to the advantage of the scholarly community.

Contemporary conditions of cultural production of some groups thus do not differ radically from the historical situation in the crucial respect that the sale of cultural products is seldom the base of the private economy of those engaged, whether in the arts, science, education or legal systems (to use Bourdieu’s classification) – except for one sector: the media and mediated cultural production (“popular culture”).

And precisely the “invasion” (grasp of power, “emprise”, as Bourdieu says) of the media – I would prefer the more modest expression ‘interplay’ – into the other sectors of cultural production has introduced an element of commercial structure into cultural production as a whole. The most convincing evidence of this development is the importance which “popular culture” in the sense of mass-produced and mass-distributed goods and works, easily and cheaply accessible to vast numbers of consumers or users on the surface of the whole planet – has acquired. Media workers, as well as those engaged in the “creative industries” or cultural industries, are just

---

132 *Sur la télévision*, second part

133 I have referred to this notoriously ambiguous term before – it should be repeated that the undistinguished use of it is detrimental to most of cultural studies themselves – and brings with it a lot of presuppositions, according to the the intentions of the user…
as dependent on the economic success of their business as are those employed in other sectors of the society. But still, cultural production is by and large characterised by other kinds of economic structures than commercial or profit-making structures. Institutions of art, education, legal normative activities, in courts, parliaments etc., and research are still largely financed either by public sources or the “civil society”, in terms of organisations, trust funds, churches etc. This goes also to a large degree for the most “privatised” of all capitalist economies, such as the USA.

Labour conditions in the different subsections of cultural production may vary drastically: from the more or less unpaid work of some groups of artists (in many countries particularly visual artists) over armies of short-term project-employed actors, musicians and temporary teachers in universities, to rather stable conditions of employment of many of those working in university institutions, educational systems etc.

One common feature of change is the reduction of fixed-term employment in favour of project-based short engagements, in the arts and in the media, above all. Labour-market legislation has even, in this case, provided an incitement for employers to systematically use short-term employments, interpolated by periods of exclusion before a new term of employment is fixed.

Also public institutions tend to adjust to the market-driven dissolution of employment security structures, short-term employment becoming the rule for most younger cultural and media workers. Obviously this is likely to bring a kind of deepening gap between generations, permanent posts being mostly held by older age groups.

Reflexivity and the “drama of expectations”

Labour market conditions constitute one basic link between some groups of producers in the cultural sector, notably the arts, the media and parts of research. But also, more radically, looking from the point of view of what is produced, separating the study of artistic production, production of norms and judicial practice, education, and science from the media production becomes increasingly difficult. This view is rather commonplace from an anthropological perspective, focussing on other (notably “primitive”) cultures. In more “modern” contexts this goes for the distribution of products but also for the production itself, such as the multimedia-based collusion of products from diverse spheres – in some cases rather counter to expectations or at least conventions. But also production is increasingly intersectorial.

Bourdieu’s pamphlet “On Television” in 1996, discussed the “invasion”, “take-over”, enterprise by the media (or “journalism”) over other cultural production fields, such as research and philosophy. The role, which the media play, despite many allegiances from parties concerned, in the legal systems is evident but often a taboo.

This process is often named “mediatisation”, but perhaps it is better to term it “intertwining” of cultural production sectors, since the influence also goes the other way round and involves several sectors of cultural production. The German media researcher Gerd Kopper has termed the relations between politics and freedom of expression of the media a “drama of expectations” – this phrase might be valid also for the relationship as a whole between cultural production, also outside the media, and public political life. Under the definition chosen in this study, also major parts of the political life, viz. the creation of norms inside and outside a legal system (including media legislation), are part of the cultural production – consequently we are faced with the interplay between sectors of cultural production. No politician could in contemporary societies expect to stay in office very long, if she or he is not on good terms with the press or

---

134 At least in the Swedish case the public broadcasting corporations seem to practise the same periodical exclusion systems as private employers, or even more radically.

135 Anthropology (“cultural”, in contradistinction to “natural” anthropology, or, earlier, “ethnography”) is mostly supposed to deal with “un-modern”, “pre-modern” (albeit contemporary), or just “alien” culture, from an ethnocentric North American or European perspective. Anthropology mostly assumes a perspective “from outside”. The inside perspectives are mostly called “sociology” or (particularly in a historical or intra-traditional perspective) “ethnology”. All these distinctions are challenged by the cultural study approach.

media in general. And, obviously, the role which the media, still mostly the traditional mass media\textsuperscript{137}, play in the political life is balanced with the framework that the political life, in both democratic and non-democratic societies, provides for the media.

Not even in the strictest dictatorships are the holders of power guaranteed a positive media image – holes are, deliberately or by chance, bored into the informational fire-walls. Even slaves sometimes behave unexpectedly. The cracks in the information embargo of Eastern European Communist regimes were certainly most important factors for their collapse. China and many Arab States are still upholding some walls, but it is unlikely that they will resist for a very long period. And, reversely, in societies like the United States, where the non-interference of the state in the media is a constitutional dogma, cases of very advanced control of media discourse by the central government and ruling political forces have been subject to ample, although deeply controversial, documentation.\textsuperscript{138}

The interplay is there, not always predictable and manageable, indeed a “drama of expectations”.

**A paradox of cognition**

Actually, this drama might also, on a more epistemological level, express a “paradox of cognition” as follows:

1. The media represent in most modern societies the main source of knowledge in the political and social life.
2. The media are, at the same time, involved in a constant and unpredictable interplay with actors in the political life. And, moreover, the media represent a source of knowledge that is, more than for example research, subject to constraints of resources, such as time, and sometimes will, precisely because of their (natural and justified) role as partners in political discourse, to check their sources of information and thus to establish an uncontroversial reliable base of knowledge.
3. On a personal (phenomenologically immediate) level, there is a common experience of events observed by an individual media user, as being accounted for in a misleading or even fraudulent manner, by media. This is manifested, frequently, by the low esteem accorded to media workers in large sectors of the populations (for example in France), albeit some media products (such as television newscasts) enjoy high prestige as major sources of information.

The conclusion might be rather depressing or nihilistic, viz.: we possess no reliable knowledge of our political and social environment. It is actually rather parallel to the problems pertaining to any critical scrutiny of historical texts.

Optimism might, however, prevail, if we consider the classical “paradigm case argument” instance\textsuperscript{139}: if no knowledge is available, we should simply not use the word ‘knowledge’. This applies, even if a number of snags are hidden in the qualifying terms used above, such as “reliable”, “uncontroversial” etc.

A parallel case could be found on a more general epistemological level. As indicated in the discussion of Lakatos and other critics of Karl Popper’s epistemology, a related phenomenon could be observed in scientific research, that is, another source (indeed the most prestigious and uncontroversial) of knowledge, in cultural production. “Progress of science”, as accepted in most

\textsuperscript{137}The question whether the notion of “mediatisation” should also apply to other kinds of media than traditional mass-media is intriguing, but mostly it is taken for granted that only newspapers and broadcasting is included – actually the idea of a “mass-medium” as such is more and more challenged today – perhaps the entire structure of legal protection and of political analysis of the media is ripe for a quite radical overhaul? The phenomenon of “blogs” seems to have been the first one to really intrude on the mass-media scene, albeit primarily giving space for rather conservative or Neo-Liberal young men – in contrast to the hopes put to the Internet about 10 years ago, in the wake of the enthusiasm that digital democracy stood for, where mostly Green or even some anarchistic trends seem to have been in the foreground.

\textsuperscript{138}The classic is Chomsky-Herman’s repeatedly reprinted and revises Manufacturing consent. More recent examples, focussing on other media – film and TV – are Michael Moore’s production. On a general level the “embedded” journalists of the US invasion forces in Iraq in 2003 illustrate conscious propaganda strategies involving the “free” media.

\textsuperscript{139}The term is attributed to Norman Malcolm, cf. Scott Soames Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century p.161 ff
discourses, is described by Lakatos as a continuous battle with the acknowledged and fundamental mistakes, in observations, generalisations and theories alike, recurring along the entire history of progress.

This might remind us that mistakes, errors, exaggerations, misinterpretations, sloppiness in terminology etc. are universal, not to say constitutive, of all products of human creation, that is, cultural production as such. Error humanum est might become a privilege, not a default... Extreme relativism, just as little as dogmatic scientism or absolutism, captures this situation. The occurrence of mistakes is – on the level of communication – essential to human beings. Whether we should attribute this noble attribute also to animals, plants and machines is disputable, but it is most safely anchored in human experience, or by descriptive comparison to humans. In any case it is a predicament, in the literal sense, of human creation, human knowledge, and “intentionality” as such, that the activity required in cultural production also predetermines its unpredictability, and its fallibility – the cases of mistakes are as unforeseeable as the hour of our own death... It is, indeed, also a drama of expectations.

Social action is – I know of no exceptions – communicative action. The reverse could also be said, on a “meta”-level, or level of reflective analysis: communication is essentially social, not only in concrete situations (where it is evidently the case) but also on the level of understanding terms like “meaning”, “sense” etc. There is no such thing as a private language.

Social action and social structures are necessarily to be understood as actions and structures imbued with sense or meaning. In other words, it does, strictly speaking, not make sense trying to describe social action, neither on a common-sense level nor on a more systematic scientific level, without including communicative dimensions. The first systematic attempt by Alfred Schütz in 1932, followed by most scholars in “micro-sociology” do invalidate attempts to account for human “behaviour” without including references to meaning – whether by hard-core behaviourists, “positivist” psychologists or social scientists, or, for that matter, by some present-day bio-scientists (sometimes claiming to be “cognitive scientists”). It should rather be understood as a metaphysical position – assuming only one category of being, and, accordingly, one kind of scientific approach. The project (or dream) of a “unified science” is still tempting to many scholars.

One way of resolving the seemingly paradoxical issue of failures of cultural production is to combine empirical descriptions of social contexts, like the media and other spheres of cultural production, with a more formal approach of grammatical (syntactic) descriptive models and the interpretive analysis provided by phenomenological and/or hermeneutic theories, deriving from concrete interpretations of texts (literary, religious or scholarly). This is done by various schools of discourse analysis, which, just like the cited “paradigm case argument” situates meanings of crucial terms like ‘knowledge’, ‘reliability’ and ‘truth’ in a wider domain of meaning. If there is no sense in applying a term in a certain context, some kind of theoretical disorder is to be cleared up – or the term cleared away. A “witch” is something that has to be given a different context today than in the 17th C European discourse. Context involves expectations, both at the individual and social level. Since expectations are, socially and individually, influenced by events and changes they are to a certain extent, unpredictable – that is, a drama. We do “stop the world” in describ-

140 We enter a deeply fascinating metaphysical-conceptual field here: is a mutation which damages a species a “failure”? Or one which favours adaptation to environment a “success”. To whom? What is the best way of describing the role of antibiotic-resistance acquired by bacteria? Or the “capacity” acquired by cancer cells to resist treatment? Is the failure of a cat to capture its pray a mistake?

141 Whether there is other action than social action might be disputed – it seems to be the nucleus of the term “action” itself, as distinct from “behaviour”, that it involves consideration of meaning, and meaning is mostly described as a social norm, or rule of language (discourse).

142 Mostly named Schutz after his emigration to the United States. Schütz, as mentioned, was inspired by both Weber and Husserl.

143 One rather consistent proposal for a monistic metaphysics inspired both by behaviourism and quantum physics is Bertrand Russell’s The Analysis of Mind, though written in 1922, still deserving attention, in view of its explicit metaphysical ambitions.
ing it, finding generalisations, inventing models, constructing schemes, beautiful mathematical
formula, but all the same the world does not stop.

The gist of this approach is to propose, and perform in some detailed studies, analyses of
the relations between the conceptual-linguistic and more general contexts of a socially communi-
cative character. Studies into the interrelations of diverse spheres or fields within the wider realm
of cultural production – such as between philosophy and science, science and media, art and me-
dia, justice/legal norms and media etc. on a, as it were, “horizontal” level, are supplemented by
studies that establish a more general picture of an entire field of discourse, in a given environ-
ment at a given time.

It goes without saying that this approach is rather risky, as are all approaches to state a
more universal or unifying pattern of description, be it in historical “epochalisations”, sociologi-
cal or economic similar exercises (modernity, post-modernity, experience economy etc.). It is
however difficult to argue that research and analy-

ses into human condition

s differ in

this respect from research into “nature” – from physics, biology or chemistry. Age-old contro-
versies on the relations between experiment, observation and theory illustrate this circumstance.
Ironically, the only scientific field where these problems become smaller seems to be mathema-
tics, and perhaps logic, (and if philosophy is permitted as a science, also philosophy), simply
because these disciplines pretend to be in some sense “pure theory”, that is not dependent on
“facts”, that is, the world.
Power and cultural production:

The Reign of mind

The link from the general issues so far discussed to an analysis of the actual situation of cultural production in the affluent societies of the European and North American continents is not obvious. The point in this study is not to discover new facts but rather try to understand generally recognized facts in a new light – bearing in mind that the “generally recognized facts” are objects for to diverse accounts under selective interpretations, perspectives etc.…

In approaching a more concrete kind of analysis a first step will be to look into some of the interplays by diverse cultural production spheres, from the point of view of the relations of power.

A second step will be to look into some of the major dimensions of social change evoked by social scientists and analytics, evaluating some aspects of power relations in cultural production.

A third step will be to discuss some more concrete issues from the political battles in some countries, and, suggesting a few lines of action founded upon the consequences of these struggles.

The cultural object, the natural object, the artefacts, mediatisation

The cultural object is – quite generally speaking and, without any exception a public object, regardless of whether one accepts that the notion of object as such implies that it is public, from the point of view of individual lived experiences, or not, in view of the fact that the object of my (subjective) perception is not only mine but always my perception of an object of this or that given class of objects. Perception of something as something is always categorizing. But there might be degrees in “publicity” – a natural object is not “produced” in the same sense as a cultural object. Obviously our perception and description of natural objects are produced – right on a par with objects as a whole. But as objects they are normally, “naturally”, also perceived, conceived, as independent of human interventions. This applies in spite of the ongoing “humanisation” of this earth, which moves the frontier gradually. A Belgian Blue beef cow is both a natural or a cultural object, just as a garden or a wheat field, since on this planet also animals, plants and whole sites are “cultural” – after all, the original sense of the word refers to agriculture. But to be sure, the stones on the moon Titan of Jupiter, are not there thanks to human action. Few would be ready to state that the Universe is a social construction, even if it could only be understood by theories of relativity, curved space, Big Bang etc., that is, social constructions.

And, literally, the notion of “thanks to” may be used as a demarcation criterion between the cultural and the natural. The natural is taken to exist “no-thanks-to” human action and thought.

After this excursion into extra-terrestrial space we might look into our own space of cultural production, turning, after these general arguments in favour of the amalgamation of spheres of studies of cultural production as a general attitude, our attention to some more specific cases of interplay.

---

144 I have taken the term from Twardowski’s cited pioneering study on artifacts, from 1911.
Interplays – entanglements - in cultural production

MEDIA AND THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Bourdieu and the journalistic field revisited

The first case is gracefully supplied by Pierre Bourdieu. As noted Bourdieu acts not in his capacity as a reputed scholar in the area concerned, but rather as an “informed and active citizen”. His work within media and communication studies is practically negligible. Bourdieu generalises, in an interesting manner, the case of media to the entire sphere of cultural production. The set-up of the case is rather well-known.

Bourdieu’s “On Television”, was published in 1996 together with a reprint of an earlier short article on the “Take-over of Journalism” (L’emprise du journalisme). It was an intervention in a debate following his participation in a direct-transmitted programme of the educational French TV-channel France 5 on social movements and strikes in France at the end of 1995.

Bourdieu was invited to participate for two reasons, interrelated but distinct. One was his undisputed position as a world-famous and universally quoted scholar, the leading French sociologist of his time, pioneer in cultural sociology. The other was his position in the midst of the French tradition of “engaged” intellectuals, taking political positions and fighting against opposing camps, in this case the right-wing Government under Alain Juppé, a close friend of the then President Chirac.

After the show Bourdieu launched a fulgurating attack on the programme leaders in the flagship of the French intellectual left-wing monthly Le Monde Diplomatique, for having broken promises given to him on the terms of his participation and for exercising a kind of violence towards the participants in the panel. Bourdieu subsequently presented a detailed argument in a video-taped recording from Collège de France, distributed by a local Paris cable channel.145 This lecture is basically reprinted in “On Television”. The gist of his attack was that the particular cultural production sphere of the media, notably television, and the persons attached to that medium, have taken over power of other cultural production spheres, notably scholarly research, and exercise a kind of oppressive regime over the entire cultural production.

The debate following Bourdieu’s intervention was long and controversial. Some points of more general interest should however be noted:

1) Bourdieu’s position of a “celebrity”, in the cultural sphere of scholarly research does not quite harmonize with his criticism against celebrities in television. Bourdieu’s position resembles Chomsky’s in this respect, they both act in as intellectual “celebrities”, not as media research professionals.146 His scorn of the popular appeal of certain intellectuals147 - in terms of being invited to TV shows, selling large numbers of books, good relations to the political dominant class, economic means at their disposal etc., affecting their intellectual and moral integrity, classifying them as “fast-thinkers”, was a rather risky undertaking, in view of his own renown. Some of the formulations in “On Television” even associate to French intellectuals who collaborated with the Nazi occupants during the Vichy régime.

2) He launches, on the basis of his rather occasional participation in a TV-show, a criticism towards the media sector as a whole, notably its dominant position in cultural production

145 It should be noted that, although this forum is perhaps the most prestigious of all in France, it is open to the general public, anyone could, provided there is space, listen to a lecture at Collège de France.

146 Chomsky is better oriented than Bourdieu, and is assisted by a vast number of media study professionals in his critical projects.

147 The prominent example is Bernard Henri-Lévy, earlier left-wing, converted to liberalism, popular, rich and a constant guest on TV and other public fora.
as such. This was criticized as a position rather well known in the history of modern media, labelled “moral panic”. Sometimes the position is more anchored in moral traditionalist circles (like religious criticism of immorality in films), sometimes rather firmly tied to intellectual elites. Adorno’s criticism of jazz may serve as an example – odious since it associates to earlier obscurantist and racist attacks on jazz in Western societies.

3) His position is also risky considering his political opposition to Neo-Liberalism, since, his main attack being directed against “journalism”, he underestimates the economic constraints to practising journalists. In blaming individual journalists, programme producers and an entire cultural production sphere for conformism and political uniformisation, he involuntarily sides with the liberal circles and media owners, who use the notion of “journalism” to avoid talking about the concentration of power and capital in the sphere. This position serves as an argument to resist public intervention against monopolisation of media ownership.

4) His final intervention in the debate (viz. the lecture and “On Television”) was presented in a context, where he did not risk interruptions, demands for clarification, objections etc. To regard this kind of program as a “normality”, or a politically and ethically more valuable contribution to democratic debates, appears, at least, naïve. The principle of Collège de France in have lectures open to the general public may be attractive, but nobody expects neither the “lives” of this forum nor academic lectures in general to replace media debates, newscasts and information in their roles for contemporary democracy.

Notwithstanding these caveats - or perhaps exactly because of them (!) – Bourdieu’s intervention is a useful reminder of the fluidum that the diverse cultural fields constitute, their interplay, and the power struggle inherent in this interplay, and, again, a strong argument in favour of not isolating media studies from other cultural studies. He also delivers a demonstration of the validity of his own notions of cultural and social capital – involuntarily!

The reflexivity of cultural production is thus illustrated, in several layers, by Bourdieu. Underneath the general discussion there is a layer, which is more straightforwardly political or ideological, than Bourdieu states explicitly, that is, opposition to the right-wing or Neo-liberal domination of mass-media in France, personified by a number of media stars situated on the political right. This does not alter the fact that the entire journalistic profession is, by insufficient attention and reflection on Bourdieu’s side, it seems, attacked, without paying attention to the social predicament of that profession. Bourdieu and most of the ensuing debate missed the circumstance, too, that the channel, to which Bourdieu was invited, is not a general TV-channel but a small, state-owned and regulated, educational day-time channel, replaced in the evenings by the French-German cultural channel Arte, and so rather different from the private French TF1 and other entertainment channels of TV.

“The politics of culture” – cultural policy, popular culture, populism and Bildung

Now, if it is Bourdieu’s merit to have put his finger on some of the interfaces between different cultural fields, he should also be given credit for pointing at a kind of double-layered interplay between what is traditionally labelled cultural policy on one hand and the political aspects of the arts and other cultural production fields on the other.

Bourdieu’s “Distinction” is a deeply penetrating study on the cultural habits in France in the 1970s – in terms of the use and consumption of cultural products, mostly from the arts area - and

---

148 Economou-Forstorp, + ref to the French debate
149 Criticized by Terry Eagleton in the essay “Tel does not like jazz”.
150 In the national Swedish debate this angle of the debate was welcomed both by a prominent publisher defending the position of the major media family (Bonnier), as well as repeated by a Liberal minister of culture.
151 As already mentioned the Swedish writer Stig Dagerman was well before Bourdieu in the use of the term cultural capital, already in 1948.
the social differentiation or segregation which accompanies these habits. In particular, he scrutinizes the function of arts policy, educational policy and media policy for the corroboration of social differences and power relations, and sees their role as, briefly, to enrich those already rich in social and cultural capital, and to subjugate those already poor.

Bourdieu’s study in this respect might be read as a criticism of the idea of “cultural policy”, in government administrations in the Western world from around 1970, and earlier in the Communist states, and a protest against pretensions of setting arts traditions and standards of the elites as the undisputable value for any political structure of cultural production.

In recent debates on the “experience economy” and Neo-liberal criticism of the “cultural elitism” of the established fine arts152 Bourdieu’s study and criticism has become even more salient – and marks a counterpoint to the criticism launched by Adorno and Horkheimer in the 1940s towards mass culture and cultural industries.

The alliances formed may appear strange – and may be situated around the notion of “popular culture”, as discussed repeatedly above, in relation to the debate on power structures and cultural studies. For, even if commercial editors, media owners or music industry magnates might rightfully argue that their products are genuinely “popular”, in the sense of being preferred and bought by the majority of people, the phenomenon or relations of domination, viz. domination of taste and markets, is a reality, not least perceptible by economic analysts.

The ambiguity of the notion of popular culture (a notion which Bourdieu rejects153) adds to a confusion of the debate. Popular taste or popular culture, in the sense of 1) traditional preferences of “old times and customs”, 2) non-elite, viz. mass or broadly embraced culture, 3) the “genuine expressions of working class culture” compete with 4) the commercial notion of popularity, in terms of best-sellers, economic success and related criteria.

Criticism against elite culture is possible from all these four (or more) perspectives established by the various interpretations of the discourse of popular culture. A left-wing criticism against the refined elitism and avant-gardism of the few, is proposed by, for example, the Birmingham school, and a Neo-liberal or market-oriented criticism from many commercial enterprise spokesmen as well as advocates of the political right. This is not an unusual political phenomenon – one might with some justification, but also prudence, term it “populism”, well known both on the left-hand and right-wing sides of the political spectrum.

On the left side (viz. Communists and Social Democracy) there is, on the other hand also a kind of alliance with conservative elitism, by simply taking for granted canons or standards of “good culture”. “Cultural education” (Bildung) is, in this kind of ideology, an important political aim – distributing and spreading the best of cultural products or the “cultural heritage” to everyone, irrespective of the economic resources or cultural capital of the individual. This attitude is easy to embrace in the educational and scientific fields, easier than in the arts, since very few are ready to radically contest the value of education (including the canons of taste, knowledge and history built into it), or scientific knowledge.154 Education or learning scholarly practice is mostly accepted as a normal factor of socialisation in any society. In the arts – including “popular” arts – relativism is much more an accepted perspective, at least nowadays in public discourse. The dynamics of taste changes is also influential: while jazz, the Beatles and rock music in general were initially far away from the elite cultural tastes in the Western European societies, there is clearly a process of “promotion” transforming the public space.

It seems to be more difficult to accept the same kind of change in other fields. An example is popular painting – little seems to indicate that the cultural elite and fine art magazines, or for that matter arts trade, both buyers and sellers, devote attention to the kind of pictures made in

152 In favour of a more commercially and market-oriented acceptance of popular culture, and a withdrawal of public support to accepted canons of quality culture.
153 In Questions de sociologie.
154 The “alternative” science or knowledge models have remained very marginal, as have alternative forms of education – although successful, perhaps paradoxically, in precisely the elite circles that normally guarantee the canons of the arts etc…. Cf Waldorf schools etc. that are mostly used by families with a surplus of at least cultural capital...
the countryside for farmers, sold along the quays of Seine in Paris, or in frame-and-glasser shops. This kind of production is huge, and retains its popularity, despite the contempt or ignorance from “high-brow” art galleries, art dealers and culturally educated people like artists and critics. It would not even, normally, be categorized as art at all. Obviously, some kind of “objective” evaluation of this kind of art is constituted by the arts trade. Nobody would invest in pictures sold by a person on the Seine quays…

Just as in the arts trade these issues come into play, whenever public discussion touches the fields of artistic production, notably whenever questions of public subventions to artists, the cultural heritage and the media (which might be regarded as core sections of the public cultural policy) are up for decision.

Actually the real decision-making structures have not changed very much since the outset of public support of culture in ancient times. The good taste of someone is just taken for granted, be it the king, the church or an academy of art. And that is where the available money goes, too – that is, public money. We are back at Bourdieu’s initial criticism.

It is, actually, difficult to treat concrete issues of subventions to individual artists, or institutions like opera houses, without involving philosophical matters, though this is often ignored or waved aside. This shows a “double-speak”: While relativism more or less an accepted theoretical stance or attitude among critics and artists in the public debates (“the work of art is in the eyes of the spectator”), the system of arts training and art trade (n.b. in the visual-art field), presupposes a accepted set of canons of quality. Neither art school professors nor critics generally hesitate to pronounce opinions as to the quality of an object of art, in impersonal or objective terms. Relativism in aesthetics, albeit frequently accepted in general conversation, thus has a limited real effect. The intrinsic value of the products is thus mostly taken for granted, despite the prevailing high priority attributed to “experience” and slogans like “art is life”, “life is art” etc.

**MEDIA AND THE ARTS: LEGISLATION AND POLITICS**

The politics of culture – freedom of expression, cultural policy, media policy

The common divide between arts policy and media policy in administrative and political contexts implies that political interventions such as regulations at all levels and subventions are differently designed in most democratic states. At the constitutional level media normally occupy a prominent place, while culture in the narrow sense of the arts and cultural heritage rarely play a more than marginal role. And basically, whereas arts policy and the cultural heritage are, historically, more or less uncontroversially subject to public interventions and taxpayers’ support, the media are surrounded by legal structures which by and large are designed taken to **avoid or prevent** public interventions that might change existing control or management structures, notably ownership of companies etc. Although broadcasting is mostly subject to public intervention measures – and are in Europe and many other countries still in public ownership – the general attitude remains that state interventions are contested, as a rule – even to the detriment of what is ordinarily considered to be fair competition.

Therefore politics of media and the politics of culture – in the restricted sense of arts and cultural heritage – often play rather separate games, and it is usually more difficult (at least following Bourdieu) to distinguish a particular media policy which could be branded as being in the service of some kind of elite producers, as such, than it is the case for arts policy and educational policies. The divergences run differently: in media policy in the narrow sense it is mostly clear

---

155 Viz. “lived experience”, in German “Erlebnis” of the romantic tradition, referred to above, from Fichte and onwards, systematized in Dilthey’s work.
that governments listen to and in practice follow the advice or points of view expressed by the media owners or leading editors, employed by and loyal to the owners. Media politics is ostensibly a drama of expectations, also at the basic level of constitutional regulation. Arts policy, at least in some states, though also involving cultural producers in decision-making, seldom bears the same character, involving the fundamentals of democratic regulations.

There are border-line cases, where media are also involved in politics of culture, in the same sense used by Bourdieu, however, as markers of the elite status and a promoter of the prestige of a particular group of select people. Some systems of subventions to these media exist, on the basis of their role in arts life. In these cases media rather involve the general canons of cultural policy or publicly supported art, which means that “popular culture” is rarely supported.

Media policy, in contrast to arts policy, is thus mostly placed in the centre of political concerns – and if alarm sirens are sounded from the media that freedom of expression is in danger, public opinion and citizens at large could be mobilized to a degree, which is seldom the case for other cultural production fields. This reflects the fact that policies, on legal regulation of the media, are mostly negative: to prevent public intervention from intervening into the content of the media, not generally to further the existence of any particular media kinds or brands. Arts policy, research policy, and the cultural heritage, on the contrary, are typical zones of generally accepted positive (viz. economic) public intervention measures, but on the other hand are mostly given a rather secondary place in public concerns and political debates.

Taking Bourdieu’s attack on “journalism” as a basis, it might not be impossible to discover a closer analogy between politics of the media and culture, however, for example in regarding social capital and discourse privileges of journalists, as well as legal protection measures of this group of professionals, only as a means of upholding the privileges of this particular group of people. Mostly, though, one risks facing difficult questions such as the following: if these privileges should be removed, would this not endanger the entire political democratic process? It seems easier to argue that cuts in subventions to symphony orchestras or opera houses do not change basic democratic institutions.

The “expectation drama” is therefore more a feature of the media sector than the other cultural production sectors. Now, indirectly, however, we might find, for this very reason, that Bourdieu’s view of the politics of culture is valid also for the politics of media, though in the following, somewhat intricate way.

If 1) media policy is really one part of the interplay between political power and the “third” estate, and

if 2) media owners, as well as other interests (such as “journalists” as a guild) in this sector do have an active role in the power structure of the state, as partners in the expectation drama of establishing the constitutional framework of the state and

if 3) this third estate is seldom under the domination of popular or under-privileged groups – in most states of the world the press is controlled and owned by major capital interest groups, sometimes tightly linked to general industrial or financial interests,

then, quod erat demonstrandum, media policy, just as other parts of cultural policies should be included in the power system relations governing the entire cultural production.

When discussing cultural production, for example newspapers and commercial broadcasting, under private control, the political relations are mostly indirect and part of an informal power play. For the case of publicly controlled broadcasting services it is difficult to deny that some

156 Sweden has gone far in this direction, since most committees taking decisions on subventions, scholarships etc. in the public spheres consist of mainly representatives of artists organisations, just as in the field of research “peer review” is the backbone of the public research fund decision making. The Swedish EU presidency in 2001 organized a seminar in Visby, Sweden, aspiring to extend this practice to other EU states and the central community level.

157 While for example, in Sweden, cultural or literary magazines do not in general qualify for a large-scale public intervention, such as the one that exists for the daily press, subventions are granted, on the merits of their role in cultural life. This has complicated the life of periodicals which do not declare themselves as cultural. A rather curious definition of “daily” in the Swedish press subvention system allows newspapers published only weekly to receive subsidies...
kind of relationship exists between the current political majorities and public media, despite “arms length” distances built into the public media systems, constantly brought up in its favour (and rightfully so!). Few of the Western public broadcasting systems are completely independent of democratically elected institutions, be it only financial regulations (licence fee rates decisions) or accountability to regulators.

Also in the public sector a kind of expectation drama is common – albeit under a somewhat indirect scenario: the public willingness to pay licence fees presupposes that public media are not too marginal in terms of attendance rates – otherwise MPs begin to worry. On the other hand also a reverse situation might occur: if complaints against public broadcasters for catering only for some specific or elite interests become too loud, subventions might be reduced, despite the fact that most public broadcasters are explicitly bound by licence conditions or remits to transmit costly news and current affairs programmes, promote education, cultural debates and the cultural heritage etc. – some sectors of which, it might be argued, interest primarily privileged sphere of the culturally rich groups...

When it comes to other fields of cultural production, such as art the gap is mostly larger between a ritual respect for creative freedom and a widespread, and socially stratified, aversion towards new and provoking expressions of art. Although the application of the solution of “tyrant murder” does not necessary appear in all cultural production sectors, a glance at diverse fields of artistic production underscores the pervading role played by the media, and accordingly, the interplay of power relations over the entire cultural production and suggests a wider scope of potential strife, referred to by the metaphors of “drama of expectation” and “tyrant murder”.
The table below indicates, without claim for completeness or analytic rigor, on a very superficial level, the pervading role of the media in cultural activities, mostly in an “arts” sense.

“Media-bound” cultural activities fields are written in *italics*, or, wherever an equal balance is supposed, in both italics and ordinary fonts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: forms of culture and its players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCTION Genre</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISTRIBUTION types</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSUMPTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generally, the tolerance towards artistic freedom is rather high, as a “sleeping partner”, for public opinion in democratic contexts. But as soon as some provocative action or production are being discussed, public opinion rather easily switches to a censorship-minded attitude. This does not necessarily concern only provocations involving decency or royal houses, blasphemy etc. but also questions more related to taste. In undemocratic contexts, or in times of confrontation between democratic and authoritarian rule, this is abundantly clear. Historical examples are the Nazi attacks on “entartete Kunst” extreme case of rather common reaction in “ordinary, honest and decent people” (branded as philistines or petty-bourgeoisie by artists…) towards new forms of artistic expression and, on the other side of the political spectrum, Communist branding of art as “bourgeois”. The confrontation between a Danish (right-wing) newspaper and a large part of Muslim populations in various states on the Muhammed cartoons, involves also a third cultural production sphere, religion. Debates on new public art monuments are legio.

Ultimately, the metaphors used here express the fact that a dialectic governs this situation. The essence of a liberal attitude to the freedom of expression, of cultural creativity and of the media is, as e.g. stated by the late Swedish Premier Olof Palme: we have to allow expressions (in words, tones, or images) that we do not like. The application of this formula may however often turn out to be wishful thinking in situations of sharp conflict.

Although the innocuous use of the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ presupposes some community of social cohesion which is precisely absent in situations of sharp controversy, though as a criterion of the attitude and regulations (or lack of regulations or other interventionist measures) required for a pluralistic society, it might be rather adequate.

It is also clear that the very organisation of a public media landscape might, by itself over-rule formal liberties or regulatory tolerance. This is what Noam Chomsky in his famous “Manufacturing Consent” and others affirm to be the case during the processes of military interventions by the USA government and its allies in recent decades. The First Amendment had no impact on the general mobilisation of US dominant media in favour of interventions in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada, Cuba, Iraq, Afghanistan, nor for US support of the Israeli continued occupation of Palestinian territories beyond the internationally recognised frontiers, etc. etc. Regardless of whether Chomsky’s evidence is accepted, it constitutes a strong argument for a sceptical attitude towards a belief in statutory regulation as a sufficient protection for cultural freedom. It reminds us that social reality, where cultural production is dependent on media landscape structure, trends, discourses, ways of thinking, organising, setting the agenda, drawing up frameworks etc.

Both the artistic and the mass media fields bear sufficient evidence to support the view that both “cultural policy” in the customary administrative sense and the “politics of culture” in the sense proposed by Bourdieu are intimately linked to other regulatory or political fields. This interplay prevails in media and knowledge production (Bourdieu’s subject) as well as for media production and production/practice of legal norms.

**MEDIA AND POLITICS**

In addition to Chomsky’s scrutiny of the role of private media for US major foreign policy actions – involving the deaths of, probably, millions of people, some examples from recent European political stagings in the media might be evoked, first a couple of seemingly minor cases of conflicts between owners and editorial staff from France and then the more decisive turn of British politics.
The Tyrant murder and media privileges

The metaphor of the drama of expectations might be sharpened and developed into another metaphor with an ancient Greek flavour, viz. “killing the tyrant”.

The Greek tyrants were, at least in theory, elected to overcome a particularly difficult political situation, and their mandate was rather exceptional, but temporary, to maintain political stability and transcend sectarian particular interests for the benefit of the public good.

Following this metaphor, the power-holders of the “third estate” (external, like owners or internal, like journalists) have enjoyed privileges (e.g. in constitutional protection) considered essential for the good function of democratic pluralistic debate. Now, if these power-holders are judged not to take into consideration the public good, but more restricted interests, such as is suggested in the case of Bourdieu’s and other critics of “journalism”, then public opinion might be less willing to relinquish their prerogatives of power, that is, uphold the safeguards and specific privileges of this “tyrant” – and simply murder it, at least metaphorically…

If this way of thinking is seldom explicitly pronounced in “civilised” interventions in the debate, and so far not implemented in a European country in peace-time, it is mostly an underlying threat – indeed a part of the expectation drama… This is demonstrated for example in discussions on press ethics, where repeatedly threats of introducing statutory regulation are aired, if internal ethical codes and rulings of monitoring bodies are not respected by the media. Public opinion, in terms of a majority of people asked, not the “producing/creative elite”, is, most likely, rather inconsistent on this issue: scandals in the press or some unpleasant news might turn public opinion away from the “tyrants’ privileges” – while, being asked about the freedom of information rights, as a principle, most people are likely to mobilize massive support, and reject censorship. Attitudes might diverge in diverse social groups and strata, as well as between cultures, traditions and nations, historical situations, and categories of holders of economic assets etc. It is tightly related to what Bourdieu calls the habitus of the individual and the capital (economic, social, symbolic, cultural) of individuals and groups.

The metaphor of the “Tyrant murder” should be seen against a background of growing criticism of media production – more than artistic production or other species of cultural production. This metaphor should be taken to describe some of these misgivings, which are, I would argue, to a large degree linked to the processes of concentration of power over cultural production, in particular the media in the traditional sectors of press, books and broadcasting.

Tyrants in the antique democratic or constitutional republics were persons selected to take care of public affairs during a difficult period of the state. They were equipped with extraordinary powers and privileges, and ordinary decision procedures were set aside, for a period. After this period they were expected to step down. In later times ethical-political discussions have been frequent on the legitimacy of making tyrants disappear by violence (=killing them) if they did not relinquish power, when time was ripe. This kind of reasoning was behind the attempted assassinations of Hitler etc.

Now, the media, and cultural production (at least in the arts, education and research) as a whole enjoy an exceptional position in society – being specially protected by law so as to safeguard their position as pillars of democratic governance. This is a privileged position – in a rather literal sense of the term, since most states award a constitutional status to the liberty of media, supplementing and being a precondition for the liberty of opinion and expression of all citizens. The status is built upon the belief that the media “channel”, “reflect”, or “represent” public opinion and debate, and enjoys, as a whole, a minimum of confidence in the eyes of a large share of public opinion. This confidence, in its turn, builds upon the conviction that media do not represent only partisan interests of themselves or some part of society.

---

158 Cf. Bertrand & Petersson
This is not just a phantasm in the eyes of a media critic and observer of trends of concentration of power over cultural production outlets. On the contrary, history teaches us that the use of media might rather easily be switched over from confidence to a general mistrust.

Public opinion is, naturally, aware of the fact that media have, as a rule rather than as an exception, on a global scale, adapted to political or economic power-holders. Although some opposition is mostly also, and easily, penetrating through even the most docile media channels, people did not generally have a problem to discern the role played by the mass media in Communist Europe – and accordingly did not have any confidence in them as far as political matters were concerned, although media also there played an important role in many aspects of the daily life of people.

In individual cases the situation might be rather the opposite: campaigns of the media in the democratic West score a low degree of confidence, as far as “quality” is concerned, within sphere of the “elite” and decision-makers, while they might be quite popular, for other reasons, in broad circles. This does not necessarily contradict the picture that popular media (I have several times referred to “The Sun”\(^\text{159}\)) might have quite a decisive impact on the political scene. The scope of this kind of influence may be rather unpredictable, however – and does not presuppose neither that such a popular medium enjoys credibility in wide layers of the population nor the contrary.

The perspective of a “tyrant murder” of the position of the media would mean that public support of protective legislation vis-à-vis the media would wane and that no particular role be attributed in the context of economic, copyright or other regulation would be supported. In the end also a more open attitude towards restrictive regulation might be expected – as is frequently requested by diverse opinion groups.

The loss of confidence, on a wide scale, may obviously constitute a danger for democratic public opinion, which presupposes some kind of “authenticity” of expression. Even if one does not accept as pessimistic a view of “corporate media” as that presented by Chomsky, Herman, McChesney and a number of other US media critics, the perspective of a “tyrant murder” is seldom very distant to public opinion whenever what is perceived as offences to public decency and morality, trespassing of limits for private integrity etc, is stirring up public opinion.\(^\text{160}\)

There may be justified criticism against the ethos, coterie formations and privileged positions of cultural production actors, such as journalists and editors or owners of media outlets, a criticism which undermines the confidence in the legitimacy of the particular status of cultural production, for example its freedom, and its right to receive subsidies from public funds etc. The degree of “representativity” or social connexion between cultural producers and broad layers of society might be another issue of judgement and subject to diversity of national and cultural situations, but there is no doubt a dialectic which is important to observe and take into account.

Journalists and other media workers are, for the better and worse, often perceived as a privileged caste – just as is often the case with “intellectuals” in general - and public discontent is easily turned against this group in society. Anti-intellectualism is a regular ingredient in populist movements and political groups of discontent, not to speak of dictatorial regimes. Hitler’s Germany, Fascist Italy, Stalin’s Russia are well known, and extreme right-wing movements both in Italy and France are recent examples, just as fundamentalist religious movements from the US, over Iran, Israel, Poland, Saudi-Arabia, to the Talibans. “Intellectuals” are, more often than not, the first victims of political repression, often widely applauded by large groups of the population. “Tyrant murder” will, in some cases, be not only metaphorical but a perversion of the original

\(^{159}\) Similar cases might be cited for most countries. In Sweden the action of a very popular child book author, Astrid Lindgren, in the then most widely read tabloid paper “Expressen”, on marginal taxes, strongly contributed to the fall of a Social Democratic government.

\(^{160}\) As a personal note: I am struck by the easiness with which my media students subscribed to the idea that media content should be regulated by law, to be kept within the limits of objectivity and impartial accounts for “facts”.
idea: the real tyrants do murder those who, because of their resistance to “popular” tastes and campaigns, are falsely depicted as tyrants – by the same real tyrants – …

This is, naturally, no plea for a tyrant murder – rather a plea for reflection before this kind of attitude might become too strong to master. Some even more alarmist reflections will be sounded in the next section.

**Media pluralism: civil(ized) society or soldiers’ boots?**

The previous section has circled around the question: do the media really play the crucial role in enacting the democratic structures, which is taken for granted in most contemporary evaluations of what is a civilized society?

To play with words: a civilized society rests upon a civil society, as among others Robert Putnam suggests, that is a society where the strength and representativity of non-governmental organisations is a token of social cohesion, in terms of social responsibility, in which voluntary action plays a substantial part in social life, and where a minimal level of engagement is taken by citizens in the political life of their society. Putnam judges this structure to be a fundament of any stable democratic structure.

This view emphasises the necessity of supplementing a collectivistic institutional perspective where democracy is considered to be primarily, or even essentially, a system of governance involving certain formal procedures and authentic legal controls of power, on one hand, with on the other a perspective where voluntary and wide-spread popular engagement is enrolled in the exercise of power and forming of political praxis. Organisations, local government, unpaid work on a number of positions, accountability of power positions also in this informal sector are ingredients in such a structure. This does not imply, however, that all these structures in themselves have to be based on democratic majority principles, or to exclude traditions that may seem atavistic and distant from democratic customs. Churches and religions are model examples of such structures – where divine sources and authorities are invoked to legitimize structures and practices inside these organisations. Democratic procedures or organisational forms could not be prescribed for such bodies, precisely in view of democratic rights of assembly and association.

Normally, the commercial sector does not count as part of civil society, though Gramsci did so, but the border-line is floating, since many commercial organisations may also be impregnated by social engagement and involving a lot of voluntary work. Vice versa: most civil, though non-profit, organisations have to be **funded** by commercial economic activities (sales, second-hand shops).

Irrespective of the strength and traditions of civil society in different societies and states, it presupposes exchange with cultural production, in terms of expression of aspirations and values, representation of discourses of various groups and interests etc. The absence of a minimal representation – primarily a minimal diversity in views found in independent media outlets - entails a risk of a break-down of the civil society basis for democracy. This risk is reinforced by the lack of public attention to and analysis of the change in the power system of media production, coupled to the decline in public trust described above.

Many participants in the debate – as is testified by the wealth of media-critical networks\(^{161}\), and critics like Chomsky, McChesney, as well as Bourdieu ten years ago, would say that this is already the situation.

---

\(^{161}\) Such as Media Watch etc.
If this is so, if media structures simply collapse, as far as pluralism is concerned, several difficult questions for the future of democracy are raised:

What is the scenario to be envisaged? And what are the alternatives? Do we face a brutal disappearance of democratic rule or – Bourdieu’s thesis - just a gradual falling into sleep, where entertainment, “omnibus” news and small talk replace political debates and dialogue? Or, as opponents to this pessimistic outlook claim, will “internal pluralism” survive, even if external pluralism disappears? And, moreover, will new media outlets, primarily the Internet, take over the essential role of public debate and controversy over political subjects from traditional media like the press and broadcasting?

Crises of democracy are recurrent – but the new element in the contemporary media situation is more linked to developments in the economic life, rather than with political pressures from above. Consolidation caused by concentration of ownership is not new in liberal economies, but has taken a new impetus as commercial media acquire a growing importance.

Although many would like to see democracy as a historical necessity – linked to market economy (or at least a mixed market and socially regulated economy) it could not be taken for granted. Actually some of the recent developments in the media sector, such Berlusconi’s media empire and political influence in Italy, give reason for some pessimism as to the fate of democracy in a monopolistic media era. Also, the biggest states of this planet, viz. China, India, Russia, as well as the United States (at least if some of the “propaganda theory” of Chomsky and his circle is accepted), demonstrate the lack of congruence of market economy and democracy, and the diversity in the growth or disappearance of that system.

Two faces of “mediatisation” of politics

“Mediatisation” plays a major role in this study. The phenomenon will be discussed at length but preliminarily two dimensions should be distinguished:

1) Media acquired an independent role in politics, as actors – as illustrated by the thesis of the “drama of expectations of freedom of expression”.

2) No political action is possible in contemporary societies without involving the media.

The mediatisation theme might be concretised in several ways - it is not an entirely new phenomenon, as everyone who has watched the American classical movie Citizen Kane might remember.

One way is the direct role played by media corporations and their owners in political campaigns, elections and other crucial events in the struggle for power. This role is sometimes played openly, when for example newspapers advocate one or the other political candidate or political party. Less exposed are the informal connections between media owners/editors and political actors. And – more importantly – the political attitudes, leanings, affiliations are normally decisive

---

162 China: market economy developing, but no democracy, as yet – it will probably come? India: a formal democracy, though penetrated by huge class, caste and social inequalities, a traditionally strongly regulated economy, becoming more and more market-dominated. Russia: a fragile democracy, market economy (shock-market), which seems to strangle more and more of its democratic freedoms in the media. US: a market economy, growing social gaps, many poor people, huge social problems, 2 million prisoners, “corporate media” dominance, though an enormous wealth, low political mobilization and high trends of media concentration.

163 As mentioned before, the French right-wing presidential candidate Sarkozy entertains personal relationships with most of the major French media controllers, such as Bouygues and Lagardère, and the latter also in his turn contacts with the owner of the only remaining independent left-wing daily, Rothschild…
in the selection and emphasis on diverse topics, the use of language, discourse etc. also in media outlets that profess a neutral or purely “objective” standpoint in politically controversial issues.

The other side of the coin is the drive among politicians, or even necessity, to adapt to media formats which appeal to large audiences, such as talk shows centred around a TV star. Whether this is necessarily conducive to less serious political debates in general, for example by reducing the role of more reflected political discussions in written form, may be debatable, but inevitably it leads to a need for other rhetoric and requires a concentrated style of argument – in some respects close to propaganda or publicity, though not necessarily being so.

Politicians have, since the break-through of television as a major forum for political debates, at least since the Kennedy-Nixon campaign in the United States in 1960, had to adapt their appearance for this medium. This goes for national politics in particular but also for some regional and local stages.

The popular format of talk shows of a TV mega-star ("Evening/morning with Frost/ Letterman/Oprah Winfrey/ Luuk/Pivot") is one such forum, indispensable for most politicians who run for offices. Obviously these politicians have to be attractive for the television programme makers themselves. Much criticism has been launched against this kind of political game, but a politician could not say no to such an occasion to reach many citizens, albeit with more of a “trade-mark” reach-out than a more detailed political message. Other politicians have been playing in TV reality shows etc. It is difficult to generally criticize this phenomenon: political leaders have to employ the facilities offered to get in touch with their audiences and prospective voters. New formats are all the time invented and will necessarily be used by the political machines. The recent phenomenon of blogging is another such new outlet – criticized and hailed.

Breakfast with Mr Murdoch
The other side of mediatisation of politics is perhaps more difficult to accept, though also this side is an age-old phenomenon: that is the direct intervention of big media enterprise in election campaigns, offering support for some party, in exchange for some more or less direct repay, in terms of a legal advantage, or just a general political favour. Mostly these kinds of approaches by media owners are also linked to their own general political position, but sometimes also direct favours are granted.

Rupert Murdoch’s different contacts with the former leader of “New Labour” in Britain is the most often cited example of this kind. They stand up as blatant examples of this kind of “mediatisation”. Examples from other countries are common, probably abundantly, albeit perhaps not so directly observable and blunt. The presidential campaign in France in 2007 offered another example in the already cited frequent and intimate contacts between Sarkozy, the later elected presidential candidate of the right wing and the main media owners in France.

The kind of pressure and/or political favouritism manifested in these contacts might be regarded as corruption but are clearly impossible to avoid. Leading figures in the political life must grasp the opportunities offered, and the requirement that favours granted from the political leadership to one or the other media owner or outlet should not discriminate against others – may seem obvious but seems rather unrealistic if taken to rigidly.164

Scandals
Turning from these broader perspectives to the more petty stages of politics – scandals –some examples of the abundant mass of might be illustrative to represent this next to omnipresent aspect of democratic (and undemocratic) politics.

---

164 From the Swedish horizon two examples, though not as blatant as they might look like, prima facie: one is the press subsidy system which, though constructed on neutral criteria (formally) favors nearly exclusively newspapers with affiliations to two parties. The other is the long-term collaboration offered by the then Prime Minister Göran Persson to one of the channels of the public television SVT, in the form of extensive exclusive interviews during several years.
1. The new French president Sarkozy, elected in 2007, a right-wing politician serving on many posts, such as minister of police (interior) in several previous governments (setting the quantitative goal of 25 000 expulsions of “paper-less” immigrants from France) had a marital crisis last year. His wife revenged his own infidelity by getting herself a lover and Paris Match published a first page photo of the new couple, and the presidential candidate openly went out with his own lover. Sarkozy got furious and contacted his friend Lagardère, the most important media owner in France\(^{165}\), controlling Paris Match – and the editor-in-chief of Match was fired. Sarkozy lived now again through the election campaign with his wife but has now divorced…

2. Le Nouvel Observateur, a political weekly with a slight leftist inclination, published an article on the conditions within the Groupe Yves Saint Laurent, controlled by Gucci, owned by the richest man of France Francois Pinault (a close friend of ex-president Chirac). The CEO of the group was described as a super-diva and eccentric. Well, Gucci withdraw all their advertising from the magazine, a loss of ca 300 000 Euros.

3. Libération, the only surviving left-wing daily in France (beside Humanité, the Communist Party official paper), founded by Foucault and other intellectuals in 1973, has had economic difficulties for long, and is gradually being taken over by another of the richest persons in France, baron Édouard de Rothschild, from the well-known bankers and wine-producing family, who fired the co-founder of the newspaper and its editor-in-chief Serge July as well as the CEO. Rothschild gave two new persons the commission to review the economy of the paper, two ex-vice-CEOs coming from the recently partly dismantled, once World No 1 media conglomerate Universal-Vivendi. Rothschild just replaced Lagardère Senior as chairman of the French horse-race society…

Those and other spicy details are constantly reported by the French independent weekly Le Canard Enchaîné, in mostly well founded articles. In most of the scandals reported, leading politicians occur somewhere in the back-stage – and their friends in the circle of milliardaires (Bolloré, Bouygues, Dassault, Lagardère, Pinault, Rothschild,) etc. which controls large parts of major industrial and trade interests including most of the French media.

### MEDIA AND LAW

A category of interplays between cultural production spheres not normally being analysed under the heading of cultural production in Western societies, though natural for the anthropological study of “other cultures”, is the entanglements between the (mass) media and the legal sphere.

European or Western law courts, prosecutors and police departments might be provoked by being included in the sphere of cultural production. These basic institutions of most contemporary societies mostly have an image of having a radically different function from art or the media. Hence the inclusion might appear as a relativization of matters of a moral nature, of right and wrong, crime and punishment etc.

The remarks on reflexivity above, inspired by, among others, studies made on the subject by scholars like Bourdieu and Winther Jørgensen, should, however, teach us that what appears as evident and unquestionable about rights and wrongs is just as much part of the structure of our societies as communication systems or art in the narrow sense. The gradual evolution of a common world value system, as observed by the World Values Survey reports does not invalidate this perspective of the anthropologists, and the validity of applying it also to Western culture. Actually the transmission of norms, by punishment, judgement formulation of laws in political fora etc. might justifiably be regarded as a form of communication, within a current generation and

---

\(^{165}\) Lagardère is one of France’s richest men, among the most important owners of the arms industry, and of the Airbus consortium, but sold, together with the CEO of that consortium a large part of his shares just before the huge losses of the consortium became known…
between several generations. Looking at other cultures, whether “primitive” or “developed”, “civilized” or “barbarian”, in Papua New Guinea, the Ukraine, Sweden or the United States of (North) America, discloses to us the diversity, and normally also the constitutive generation processes, of legal systems, both formulated laws and practises at all levels. This applies to the US Supreme Court and to the US military sanctioned torture in Abu Ghraib-prisons\textsuperscript{166}, concentration camp of Guantanamo, lethal injections for which ultimately the Governor of Texas, viz. the present ruler of the United States, is personally responsible… as well as chopping hands of people in Saudi Arabia, stoning women in Nigeria, closing up people for endless periods in isolation cells in Sweden, exposing endless numbers of prisoners in Russia to tuberculosis, rapes and HIV, and, again, locking up nearly 2 million (mostly black) people in the wealthiest country of the world, in a kind of a successor to the Soviet Gulag-archipelago… Culture? Well, perhaps not in the “finest” sense associated to this word. But obviously culture produced as a system of expression, communication, living together.

The production of these norms, values or structures is as much part of the system of symbolic communication (one definition of “culture” that has a lot which speaks in its favour) as the arts, the media, education, science and philosophy or religion.

The cases of media-justice interplay briefly sketched below also constitute cases of a conflict between media and knowledge: indeed they are examples of what has been termed the “paradox of cognition”. The media were responsible not only for the general information to the public at large, but also deeply influential for the knowledge that finally was the basis for the (in some cases unjust) sentences pronounced by the courts.

The Allègre case
The accused “celebrity”, viz. the former mayor of Toulouse, the Gaullist politician Dominique Baudis, then head of the French media authority, was involved in a media stream around the serial killer Patrick Allègre, who was convicted for murders, corruption, drugs, prostitution and murder in the underworld of the city of Toulouse. Some of the prostitutes involved mentioned his name, and large parts of the media, including prestigious national dailies like Le Monde and Libération, joined in what turned out to be a libel campaign. A somewhat surprising ingredient in the affair was that the only newspapers which observed a restrictive attitude during the entire process were two papers on the left side of the political spectrum, viz. the satirical weekly Le Canard enchainé and the Communist daily Humanité, actually papers which might be expected to draw political profit from the affair. Le Canard enchainé castigates corruption in the French political structure and Humanité is usually vigilant on corruption and criticism of power abuse, notably among right-wing politicians. No process of libel has been launched against any of the media involved, so far\textsuperscript{167}.

The Outreau case
This case\textsuperscript{168} had, on the other hand, far-going consequences for many of the persons involved, being deprived of their children during the procedure, put into custody for up to three years etc. One of them killed himself in prison during the procedures. Its first stage implied that a whole group (18) including some “notables” (locally important persons) of a poor suburb to Boulogne sur mer in the north of France was sentenced to severe judgements for pedophilia and incest.

\textsuperscript{166} Only on July 25, 2007 the news that President Bush formally forbade torture by the CIA was dispatched by international news media.

\textsuperscript{167} Cf. a summary of the affair in Wikipedia.fr, Dec 25, 2007. French media are usually very quick in publishing names of persons under trial, long before any sentence has been pronounced.

\textsuperscript{168} Cf. e.g. Wikipedia eng. Dec 26 2007 for a brief account of the trial. The French version is more complete http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affaire_d’Outreau (Dec 26, 2007 as well) which also gives references to the several books and numerous media articles. Cf. also an article on the role of the media in the file established by Le Monde http://www.lemonde.fr/web/sequence/0,2,736535,1-00.html
The investigative magistrate for the case enjoyed a very strong support by most media, both TV and the press.

Four of the accused persons confessed and were convicted to jail. In the superior court it turned out, however, that none of the other involved persons was guilty, and that the affair was a “judicial Chernobyl”, where the media were very quick in judging the accused persons on very loose grounds and testimonies, that turned out to be false.

No excuses were given by the media in question, despite demands for it in critical newscasts and documentaries afterwards. The French President Chirac however presented his excuses to the innocent victims of the procedures, and a parliamentary enquiry looked into the case, presenting its report late 2006.

The Alcalà affair

The Swedish Alcalà affair is rather different in its character, though it is a good example of the interplay between the legal and the medial spheres. It demonstrated that the proclaimed non-interference in between the two different spheres of cultural production is not undisputable, even in individual legal pursuits and trials, although nobody would argue that on the general level there is a constant and legitimate interplay between the political law-making tasks and the opinion-forming role of the media – obviously one of its cardinal roles in a democratic society.

The initiator of the entire affair was the leading national newspaper Dagens Nyheter169. The legal pursuits involved and were accompanied both by personal hostility and revenge within the editorial staff of the newspaper, as well as by political and power struggle elements of a more general nature. The main personality involved, as the accused and defendant in the trials, was a well-known journalist, working for many years in Dagens Nyheter and other Swedish newspapers, reputed for his clear and outspoken criticism of social and cultural problems, notably on abuse and concentration of power. He was a respected participant in public debates on human rights, nationally as well as internationally. Being of Spanish origin, escaping as a student from the Franco regime and trained as a lawyer, he was the president of the Swedish branch of Amnesty International, another marker of a social appreciation. As part of his engagement in political matters of human rights he also published material on freedom of expression and the problems raised by media concentration. The owners of Dagens Nyheter are the biggest Swedish media group, the Bonnier family170, its managing director for a long time Bengt Braun (also for a period president of the World Federation of Newspaper Editors). This group has long been a principal target for criticism against concentration of power in the cultural sector, both in view of its large holdings in the media sector and because of the adoption of expansionist strategies in the Swedish and Baltic media landscape. Criticism from one of the editorial staff of the flagship of the media group might thus be expected to be sensitive. One ingredient in the affair was that Alcalà himself denounced a reporter and his boss for prematurely criticising tyrannical behaviour by a Director General of a State agency towards his secretary, and thus abusing media power.

The affair was opened by the Dagens Nyheter, alleging that Alcalà had almost succeeded to embezzle an important sum from an assistance project in Paraguay on human rights, for which he was a consultant, in his capacity as the chairman of Swedish Amnesty International.

The initial phase of the legal process was marked by the successive mobilisation of journalists, continuing along the court trials, involving interventions in the media by both the public prosecutor and other actors on the “anti-Alcalà” side, as well as detailed pleas in his defence from journalists and other media actors. These pleas were opposed by other journalists, sometimes in wordings that reminded of a “Kulturkampf” between the “cultural elite” on one hand, and more

169 The term ‘leading’ means that it is the most circulated subscribed newspaper (the single copy tabloids Aftonbladet and Expressen have bigger sales), though concentrated to the Stockholm capital area. Also this affair has been covered considerably in books and, obviously, media.

170 For a survey of the Bonnier group holdings cf. www.bonnier.se
popular and “down-to-earth real” reporters - often with a flavour of anti-intellectualism in general – on the other…

Alcalà was finally convicted, against his denial, in two successive court trials and sentenced to a year and a half of imprisonment – and most of his supporters in the media seem to have withdrawn.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that the process, with all its preludes and side-tracks, contained more ingredients than were finally known, both as regards the role of Alcalà, and the links between *Dagens Nyheter* and the legal institutions. One such prelude was that Alcalà’s nearest boss – the highly esteemed editor-in-chief of the cultural section in *Dagens Nyheter* – the largest and most prestigious cultural section of Swedish dailies – resigned from his post one year before over a conflict with the above-mentioned Bonnier group chief executive Bengt Braun, after Braun asked him to sign a contract including a clause proscribing criticism of the Bonnier group – and notably its dominant position in the media. This subject had been treated both by the editor himself, just as Alcalà, notably from a liberal (rather than Socialist or left-wing) point of view.

Many interpretations of the affair are possible, also taking account of the arguments presented in the verdicts pronounced\(^1\). One of them is that Braun, or the Bonnier group itself, was actively seeking a reason for getting rid of Alcalà, after the resignation of the editor of the cultural section, and that an opportunity offered itself and was amply exploited by the family and their managing director. As in all court trials this one included an interpretation of the facts established: in the major issue of the trial, viz. embezzling money from development funds, Alcalà was sentenced for attempt, that is, not for having actually taken money – whereas for the other minor accusations (over-stating travel and per-diem expenses etc.) he was sentenced for completed actions.

A remarkable circumstance is also the silence in the media after the verdict, as if all the arguments presented before, had finally been invalidated. After all, also in the Outreau case some substance was behind the accusations, though, just as in the Alcalà case, it is doubtful whether external circumstances, like the French hysteria about pedophilia in the 1990s and internal conflicts in *Dagens Nyheter* as well as power struggles in the Swedish media landscape, would have stirred up the media activities, which undoubtedly played crucial roles in both cases.

### The deconstruction of a Nazi conspiracy

This case, also Swedish, contains perhaps more tragi-comical than tragic ingredients – if the destroyed career of a young journalist is not seen as tragic. The affair centred on Sweden’s largest newspaper, the tabloid *Aftonbladet*, controlled by Bonnier’s most important Scandinavian competitor, the Norwegian group Schibsted. The process was well documented by another journalist in a series of articles\(^2\), which were later awarded the most important journalistic prize in Sweden – a prize mainly sponsored by (sic!), Bonniers, a family member of which also presides the jury…

Incidentally, the journalist however refused to receive the reward, under the motivation that it came from Bonniers…

The story goes as follows: A young journalist at *Aftonbladet* was seeking a scoop, and since discussions at that time on extreme right-wing young boys were quite hot, in the sequel of a murder committed by Nazi youngsters on a left-wing investigatory anti-racist journalist, the atmosphere was prepared.

The young journalist managed to get some articles on planned Nazi attacks on police spokesmen, including photos of armed boys, placed on the first page of *Aftonbladet*, with the assent of the responsible editor-in-chief. Rather quickly it turned out, however, that the photos of the young Nazis were actually made with their consent, and the entire scoop was a masquerade. And, it seems unlikely that, the editor of the newspaper was unaware of this fact. Justice inter-

---

1. Verdict of the Court of appeal (Svea Hovrätt) no.
ferred on two points. One was the alleged preparations for attacks - an investigation that quickly ended without any consequences for the young Nazis. The other was related to the revelation of his source by the journalist, criminal in Swedish law. This point of interaction of justice and media is the pride of the Swedish system of freedom of the press.

Unfortunately for the young journalist, he was so upset by the whole story, and the lack of support from his superiors at *Aftonbladet*, that he simply told the truth in an article in another newspaper – also revealing his sources. Since he committed this crime he was not only fired from the paper but also fined. The managing editor, who, normally (if the journalist had kept silent), would have had, according to the principle of exclusive editorial responsibility for media content in Swedish media law, to respond in a court trial for this break of the secrecy of sources, was never taken to court. Still he was obviously morally responsible for having encouraged the young man in the entire affair - hoping to find a good story for the paper. The entire story was a fake, not produced by local or other opinions (as in the Outreau case) but simply constructed by the paper itself.

This is all the more remarkable, since the other tabloid of Sweden (*Expressen*) almost 30 years ago also invented a story about a “Nazi conspiracy”, and had to pay huge compensation to the main person accused in the story in order to get out of the affair. The newspaper lost much credibility, and perhaps also its leading market position as a result of this story – precisely to *Aftonbladet*!

These and similar stories, just as the scandals related to above, are probably *legit* in most media contexts. They could, rather than being the subject of moral panic, be taken to demonstrate the porosity of borderlines between cultural production sectors. Legal systems (both the norm-establishing and the norm-applying subsystems) are intimately linked to other forms of cultural production – just as assumed by most anthropologists, for “alien” cultures. This does not mean, of course, that the autonomy of legal practices and courts of cultural production, whether in the media, science, religion or art, should not be affirmed. It does, however, bring in healthy self-criticism into the reflection on social contexts, to the effect that the Western traditional division of public power is not an achievement which could be taken for granted. The political role of the media is not restricted to political campaigns or elections but stretches far into the everyday practices in the application of law and administration.
Part II – Some realities

THE FIELDS OF CHANGE:

Geography, Technology and Politics

Any attempt to substantiate the claim that cultural production is “taking over” the human condition from material production173 – that the Reign of Mind is being established – will have to seek evidence from observations of the dynamics of social life at present. It is, as it were, an attempt to describe the principles of history itself, while history is going on. This is a courageous undertaking, but not necessarily more brave than any other scientific project. The analogy to quantum mechanics – “the observed object is affected by the observation” – is popular, although its explanatory value might be more folkloristic than precise, in particular if you follow the maxim that theoretical analysis is more about making distinctions than presenting analogies or broad generalisations. The “transcendental” or critical approach chosen here warrants, however, some optimism in this respect: the awareness of the choice of the categories or discourses applied in a is part of critical research – whether in the natural and “exact” sciences or other systematic scholarly work.

Having glanced at some examples of the interplays between some fields of cultural production, let us now choose another perspective, more related to what might be termed “disciplinary” divisions, seeking to grasp some of the broader development tendencies in social life. Such generalisations are quite common in historical descriptions, whether looking at “political” history (kings and wars...), “cultural” history (the fine arts, scholarly life, religion), “economic” history (trade, production structures), technology history etc. Very broad categorisations in focussing on diverse aspects of historical developments are always risky and overlapping, as well as subject to diverse ideological or methodological biases (“materialism” vs. “idealism”, the role of individuals vs. structural approaches etc.) – but inevitable.

Our questions are directed more to broader social sectors or approaches than to examinations of the spheres of cultural production as such. The choice of “dimensions” or fields of change, as “geography”, “technology” and “politics”, together with the major trends, labelled “globalisation”, “digitisation” and “mediatisation” suggested to characterize these fields, will, necessarily, be to some degree arbitrary. The inclusion of the cultural production fields (selected from those mentioned by Cassirer and Bourdieu) is also non-exhaustive: religion (mythology), philosophy, language are excluded, as already observed.

Having made all these reservations174, the relationships between some fields of cultural production and the fields of change – looking more into causes and effects of three “dimensions” of change – might be depicted by a table as below.

---

173 The essence of the claim made by Castells, cf. also a discussion from an explicit Marxist perspective, related to problems of “open source, open access” etc. by the sociologist Johan Söderberg, 2002 extended in 2007.
174 After Foucault’s ironic and crushing blows to any kind of pretention of the absoluteness or “naturalness” of kinds of any sort it is always a hard work to reestablish categories... but of course also Foucault had to employ categorisations, make distinctions, generalisations, with the pretention of telling some truths about history... Notions like “sector”, “dimension”, category, kind, sort etc. all fall into the same questionability zone.
The issue of globalisation

Globalisation is practically on every political, cultural and scholarly agenda, becoming as common a term as “democracy” in colloquial talk on public affairs. The term has already a history – as testified by the study of Roland Robertson 15 years ago. The current public debate was not launched by scholars – it was a media story, conceived by media workers, albeit published as a separate book. Credit, or blame, should go first of all to two German journalists from Der Spiegel (Martin and Schumann) – who got a reply from the then president of the German Social Democratic party Oscar Lafontaine.

The debate spurred by these publications has since then gone on, and even given rise to a rather large international movement, viz. “Attac”, gathering a number of opponents to many of the phenomena grouped under the expression globalisation. The World Social Fora assembled every year (or every second year), beginning in Porto Alegre in Brazil, became a new international social institution. The World Social Forum was designed as a popular and democratic response to the World Economic Forum, gathering in Davos, Switzerland, every year. The manifestations during the World Trade Organisation meetings on a number of occasions belong to the same international movement.

Publications abound, both in periodicals and books, and polemics have been abundant as well, although the sharpest controversies seem to have been mitigated. For the history of this discourse one circumstance that has been sometimes little noted in the political controversies might be recalled.

Since the end of the cold war, continuing the Second World War and the clashes between West and East in Korea, in Vietnam etc. the world has seen less global tension and conflicts. Re-

---

175 Roland Robertson 1992
176 Globaliseringsfälten
177 Lafontaine
Global conflicts have been frequent and sometimes devastating in terms of loss of human lives, and economic assets. The worst of these are probably ravaging Africa, where the forgotten wars in Congo and East Africa have cost millions of lives, in addition to the genocides in Darfour, Rwanda and Burundi. The para-colonial conflicts in the Middle East, where the only remaining superpower still exercises a direct influence as the protector of Israel and the occupant of the earlier independent country of Iraq, has attracted most media attention, but remains, in terms of loss of lives, still a minor conflict as compared to the Congo war. Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Colombia, West Sahara etc. are examples of other regional, brutal, conflicts.

Yet the very fact that these brutal conflicts have been fought on a regional level have in a paradoxical way given room for a kind of peace on a more general world level: a peace which has been the primary factor behind the elimination of obstacles for trade and financial transactions, which are at the core of the globalisation process. Trans-national (mostly controlled by USA capital interests) corporations have since decades been operating on a global level, but only the break-down of East-West tensions, with the fall and dissolution of the Soviet Union and the integration of China into the world capitalist economy, have brought about this new opening of borders and dismantling of various obstacles to the “free flow of people, goods and capital”. This new situation should in itself, as an establishment of a kind of “global” peace and detention, despite all regional conflicts, brutal imperialistic interventions by the US and its allies, in my opinion, not be greeted with anything but satisfaction.

Liberalism – neo-liberalism - pluralism
Long before the “globalisation” debate, slogans appealing for liberalisation (“deregulation”) dominated the international political arena of the affluent world. Economic theory, general political swings to the right in the United States and in the European Union have been impregnated by a growing belief in liberal economic models, market solutions, a devolution of state interventions in the economies, as well as a growing pressure to reduce public welfare systems. The International Monetary Fund also urged or forced less affluent countries to reduce their mostly modest social policy budgets in order to restore “sound” economic balances, that is, reducing inflation, even at the cost of increasing inequality, social unrest and, of course, unemployment.

Whatever view is taken on the neo-liberal ideological take-over, with its flaws and brutal effects on large sectors of the populations, also in the rich world\textsuperscript{178}, the rise of the faith in the market, and correspondent decline in the belief in human rational planning and forecast as instruments of governance states have theirs roots in the relative international detention and peace. The banality of this circumstance sometimes conceals its crucial role: it promoted a relaxation of the - actually not few - of the surviving mobilisation instruments from the Second World War economies\textsuperscript{179} throughout the Cold War. Despite numerous regional conflicts and the unilateral interventionist police policy established by the US government this basic evolution towards less international tension permitted the abandonment of the kind of “insurance policies” that prevailed in a number of central economic sectors, currency transactions etc. A period of detention in the 1980s preceded the definite turning-point: the collapse of the Soviet empire and the democratic break-through in Eastern Europe.

Probably also this preparatory period, with its liberalisations in traffic, travel, transactions, media, and rising consumption standards within the Communist system itself, exposed it to a pressure that could not be resisted. The “gentle flows” of money, people and information were actually a more efficient factor in dismantling the system than military arms race, aggressive conservative language from Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher etc. Liberalisation was a process –

\textsuperscript{178} In the former Soviet Union, where Neo-Liberal economic “shock-therapy” advisors from the West, such as Jeffrey Sachs and Anders Åslund, got the ears of the new rulers, the fall of living standards is likely to have cost, statistically, the lives of millions of people, as demonstrated by the drastic decline of life expectancy – around 10 years.

\textsuperscript{179} It is instructive to see how also the US economy, in war-time, was a planned economy – cf. for example John Galbraith’s account of his role in the 1940s.
not really a policy - both from within – the regimes did not simply have the power to resist popular pressure for better conditions of consumption etc. – and from outside, through the international growth of trade and transactions of various kinds. Generally, the pressure for a rise in living standards by introducing market mechanisms, brought about a sharp fall for a long period.

A crucial role in this transformation process was played by the cultural production, that is, in the first place the media – characterized by a mushrooming technological development and expansion and also the introduction of new international distribution methods, making national borders gradually more difficult to uphold. The advent of video players, Xerox copiers, mobile phones, satellite telephones and television were factors much more powerful than the earlier short-wave radio transmissions to transgress national and political border-lines.

Liberalisation, being the all-penetrating discourse in most political contexts, was the basis for abolishing public broadcasting monopolies in Europe, (or near-to monopolies - UK and Finland never had TV monopolies, for example) symbolically fitting into a general political pattern. The construction of the four “freedoms” of capital, persons, services and goods of the Internal Market in the European Economic Community was pursued in this spirit.

The European Social-Democratic parties did not radically resist this wave of liberalisation – instead most of them scrapped all remains of Socialism in terms of nationalisation of companies etc., and, mostly, also adopted a policy of reducing public shares in economy, taxes, state regulations etc. Indeed it is difficult to distinguish some of the policies of “new” social democratic parties from that of their Conservative predecessors, the emblematic case is of course Tony Blair’s “New Labour”. In media policies this is particularly striking.

Also, the right-wing parties of Europe and the US adopted liberal ideology, either combining it with earlier conservative, nationalist, or religious tenets, like the US Republicans, or just abandoning positions in favour of Neo-liberal faith in markets, in deregulation, tax reductions, reductions of social and welfare programmes, privatisation and competition in the earlier public spheres etc.

A quick secularisation of some old religiously based conservative parties also took place – the most blatant example being Italy, whose powerful Catholic Democrazia Christiana fell into pieces in the wake of the extreme corruption pervading Italian public life. The role of that party was taken over by the Neo-liberal Berlusconi, symbolically a media owner and businessman. Some of the opinion space of traditional conservative parties was occupied by new liberalistic movements – sometimes integrating populist and xenophobic elements in their strategies. Austria, Denmark, France, Italy and Norway might be cited.

Liberalism in a more general sense has also been adopted in the post-Cold-War era, that is, the acceptance of individual life-style choices, by for example relaxing resistance to sexual promiscuity, sexual differences, abortion, etc. US Republicans are one of the rare exceptions, so far, in resisting this kind of liberalism, while wholeheartedly adopting the economic aspects. In this wider sense liberalism is closely related to the concept central to most of this study, that is, pluralism, viz. if liberalism is understood as providing as much freedom to diverse actors as is compatible with organised democratic political governance.

Habermas, “re-feudalisation” and “the post-national constellation”

The previous excursion into the discourse of liberalism and its rebirth in Western societies (and, it seems also, Eastern ones, like India and China…) might serve as an introduction to a discussion of globalisation, in particular its relations to cultural production. In doing so acknowledgement should be given to Jürgen Habermas for the term “re-feudalisation”. The use in this study is different from his reference to uses and practices among the bourgeoisie, when it resumes practices of the nobility and royal circles, such as to equip themselves with luxury and status articles, with the

---

180 thus going the opposite direction from the US Republican party
purpose of assuring “representation”. This term should not be taken only in the simple sense of ‘meaning’ or ‘being a sign of’, but in the pregnant sense in which a businessman “represents” his company by offering luxury to his clients and himself luxury cars, offices etc. so as to demonstrate the wealth and power of his company. These insignia of representation mark the social position in society, for the businessman, just as for the more or less mighty lords in the feudal hierarchy.

The term could be extended to cover the entire social and political change which has been taking place, especially since the collapse of the Soviet empire, and the boost of the globalisation process. One of the main features of this process itself is precisely, as noted by most observers – such as Habermas 181 himself and Susan Strange 182 - a decline of the power of national states, for better and for worse. Indeed the role of national states is more clearly than before one of becoming only one group among several power players in the world arena. This is not an entirely new phenomenon – national states have always had competitors, such as religious communities, powerful commercial interests, orders etc.

Today, however, a particular change is doubtlessly taking place in that the only remaining “Overlord” on the international arena, the US, is both the host state and protector of most powerful commercial actors and promoting the role of its trans-national companies, mostly in reducing the power of other national states. The liberalisation of tariffs, the free trade agreements etc. all benefit the actors in the economic field, beyond the national context. Companies, enjoying privileges of establishing plants and production units everywhere on earth, are able to act – according to their economic strength – as equal players with a number of national states – no doubt as one of the consequences of the dismantlement of borders, national obstacles to trade etc. The US, having no tradition as such of free trade, have gradually turned to an eager promoter of liberalisation of trade.

There is a paradox here: the democratic advances that no doubt have taken place in the decades after the Soviet collapse have centred on and been carried by the national states 183. In modernity 184 – beginning in this case for example in 1848 - only states (and/or their regional/local institutions) have been bearers of legitimate democratic institutions. That is, states have been, in the literal sense of the word, bearers of a liberalisation, that is, an advance of freedom. The progress of democratic rules in states, by the fall of authoritarian regimes, is greeted, at least by lip-service, by both the old colonial powers as well as the new only super-power or Empire (to usurp the term of Negri and Hardt 185). This progress of democracy on the national level is, however, actually counter-balanced by the creation or growth of a number of trans-national “reigns”, such as companies, networks and societies or diverse non-governmental organisations (Susan Strange refers to sports as well as to organised crime, as areas where these new power structures are clearly active).

Nation-states may still be the normal framework for exercising legitimate democratic powers, but the same states have seen their range of action reduced, either voluntarily, for example by neo-liberal policies at home, or by sheer market forces or institutional external pressures, for example from the IMF or the WTO. This is not a uniform process: states have also increased their role in the course of modernisation, by the introduction of social programmes and other inter-

---

181 Die post-nationale Konstellation
182 Strange
183 Quantification of this advance might be attempted by using indexes of diverse sorts, the existence of genuine competition in general elections etc. Perhaps today at least the majority of the UN member states might be qualified as democratic and the majority of the world population living under democratic rule, taken in a rather formal and wide sense. Major exceptions are China, most states of the Arab-speaking world and Africa, in Asia Burma, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Vietnam and some earlier Soviet republics, in Europe Belorussia, in America Cuba etc.
184 Historically, democracy has not its roots on a national, in a contemporary sense, level. In Athens, and Switzerland, a democratic process began on the local (canton) level, rather than the national (federal) – the Swiss process very recently finished, since all adult citizens were not given the right to vote until in the 1990s. The large French encyclopedia Universalis (DVD edition 2004) does not consider it important enough to mention that women were until very recently not given full rights as citizens.
185 Negri and Hardt
ventions in many parts of social life of contemporary societies. But still, the analogy to European medieval history seems relevant: the kings were *primum inter pares* or a more symbolic centre of power, but shared their power with, dukes, counts, the bourgeoisie of cities and the international catholic church. States, after the introduction of democratic reforms, have to share their power with bodies that are more or less independent, and external to the institutionalised system of democratic rule, albeit not necessarily incompatible with it.

In Europe, the creation of the European Union represents an attempt to introduce a new level of democratically rooted institutions, intermediate between a federation and a national state. This projects another possible development – if the national states as democratically legitimate bodies have the will and power to “federate”, parallel to or instead of being “feudalized”. One mechanism of this “federation” process is the creation or reinforcement of legitimate international organisations. The enormously complex and intricate network of the United Nations has its theoretic fundament in democracy – human rights – but since it rests upon the principle of states as the only legitimate actor, it includes states the rulers of which flagrantly neglect the adopted charters and ethics of the UN system. Still the role of the UN system tends sometimes to be underestimated: although it does not fulfil the high political peace-aspirations of its founders, and of efficiency of action – mostly dependant on the lack of will on the part of the member states to invest it with sufficient powers - it constitutes a network of continuous and detailed cooperation never experienced and nearly omnipresent in all aspects of human life. The UN system might, in itself, just as other international organisations, be considered part of the globalisation process, and, paradoxically precisely because of its democratic deficit, also one of the actors on the international “feudal” or at least “semi-feudal” stage.

Habermas puts great confidence in the European Union, with its development of executive and legal mechanisms that replace functions of the national states, while still preserving democratic legitimacy. One problem for defining the role of this kind of new formations was illustrated by the debate on the new “constitutional treaty”, in which some controversial principles of economic liberalism were codified, in areas where they used to be political options.

The feudalisation or re-feudalisation on a global scale is an on-going process – albeit it remains to be seen how stable. A new major war, widespread political uncertainty, health problems, economic crises, environmental calamities might, just as in the past, reduce the margins of action of diverse kinds of operators. Or increase them – for example the criminal organisations ....

Actually, the “post-national constellation” might be anything from a gangster-driven, or warlord, structure - or chaos - of small, unstable entities, albeit perhaps with a big Empire in the background, to an ordered and civilized community of communities under legitimate democratic control. Historical comparison should remind us that feudal structures – embodying networks of diverse degrees of dependences, loyalties, interests – should not merely be associated with some distant dark “Middle Age” but that it is a very present contemporary phenomenon. But also that “feudal” structures might be preferable to tyranny or absolute monarchies, whether ruled by presidents-for-life, military dictators, kings, churches, almighty parties, or CEOs of pension trusts, trans-national corporations etc. Feudalism in its historical shape was a kind of “pluralism” not to be entirely dismissed. But, if we have a choice, I prefer to side with Winston Churchill, who is said to have said: “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” 186

Globalisation is discussed under many headings. Invoking the role of mass media, other media, cultural trade and production – and sometimes referring to a phenomenon labelled cultural imperialism – these “ideal”, “mental” or “spiritual” domains sometimes are referred to as *causes*, sometimes as *effects* of the globalisation process. It is both, no doubt. This is demonstrated by the East European development. Two personal examples, might be illustrative:

1) In late Communist Poland getting photocopies of papers was extremely complicated: in the Warsaw University library getting photocopies of some philosophical reference lists took days. Getting paper was difficult, it was said. This might have been true, but the main reason was that the ownership of copiers was highly restricted – since anyone might otherwise reproduce uncensored material.

2) A video tape recorder bought in the late 1980s was, obviously intended for sale also in Poland, since the manual was written also in Polish. Well, videos as all media were supposed to be censored in Poland – but obviously machines were available. And everyone with two machines could copy...

Conclusions: media development, in the form of photocopies and video tapes were inevitable for any society that aspired to be a progressive industrial society, and therefore small holes in the information curfew were permitted – which ultimately produced a water-in-the-plastic-bag effect ending in the collapse of the entire system in 1989. In the end, producing scientific articles, and even motor cars of modest brands like “Trabant” or “Syrena” became gradually more difficult to manufacture without access to copying machines, especially when foreign competition was beginning to be felt.

One might even be tempted to talk of a kind of “chaos” effect of these photocopy papers and videotape developments. This effect might, superficially, be regarded as having a material cause – paper and video recorders – but the point is that matter “carries spirit”. Paper is primarily interesting not as wrapping material but as bearer of letters, that is, “Traces of mind”.

The retreat of the state

Together with the notion of “feudalisation” borrowed from Habermas another notion emblematic for a wide-ranging discussion is Michel Foucault’s “gouvernementalité”. The notion was launched in a lectures series in 1977-78 taking Macchiavelli’s reflections on mechanisms and strategies for governance and expansion of states as a platform for reflections on the historical development of diverse ways of managing and controlling groups, communities and, ultimately, societies. The controlling functions in institutions concerned with crime, punishment and madness, the “panoptic” prisons outlined by Bentham, as well as earlier madhouses and lunatic asylums were the models, historically speaking, for Foucault’s reflections, leading over to a more general reflection over the “control over life” in “bio-politics” of contemporary society, including phenomena as abortion, contraception, diagnostics and treatment of embryos, and genetic engineering in general – including eugenics etc. A prominent follower and interpreter of Foucault’s thought has been the Italian political philosopher Giorgio Agamben.

A state is, from this general point of view, one way of organising governance, management of institutions and people. It is different from a corporation, from a local community, in terms of for example capacity of legislating, levying taxes, police and military monopolies etc. Those capacities were not, by definition, the monopolies of states in the feudal era – the very idea of feudalism was precisely to “outsource” military and police production, “federating” them if need be (hopefully) by appealing to the oaths of loyalty of princes to the king (“sovereign”). And today in federal states we have quite a variety of forms of governance different from other states.

A nation is not necessarily a state: Switzerland is composed of several nations, communist (and, still, non-communist) Russia made a sharp distinction between citizenship and nationality (Russian, Estonian, Jewish, Kazak, Kalmuck…, were all Soviet/Russian), and many other states practice similar distinctions. However, the idea of identifying these two things is a mighty force (Isaiah Berlin thought, a very underestimated force) in Europe especially in the 19th century, in Woodrow Wilson’s vision for the organisation of the world after the First World War, but obviously also at the end of the 20th. The clash between supranational empires and nationalist aspirations dominated European politics for a century. Look at a map of Europe from 1900:

---

187 in the sense in which the airstream of a fly in Europe is said to cause an earth-quake in China…

188 Michel Foucault, Sécurité, Territoire, Population. Cours au Collège de France. 1977-1978, Gallimard / Seuil, 2004

189 Berlin
Central Europe had three states, all multinational empires: Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. Italy was a “national state”, (with colonies) though rather divided in regions, Spain alike. France, Britain, The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Germany had colonies. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland were united in some ways with other national territories. The United States were just finishing the genocide of the indigenous population, closing its surviving remnants into parks or “Bantustans”, while receiving at the same time 1 million Swedes, and millions of other immigrants to populate the vast territories conquered since the beginning of the 19th century — half of it just some decades earlier, from the newly independent Mexico. “National?” No wonder that the beginning of the 20th Century was characterised by a desperate struggle for establishing a meaning to this weird adjective.

A Nation-State, or a national state? Well, national has to do with being born (the easiest start of an analysis is sometimes to go to the history of our words). A State for those who have been born…? There, no obviously, Here! A whole discipline struggles to find (cf. Harding for an overview) some order in this conceptual cluster of being born, having parents, speaking a language, exercising a religion, having a particular colour of the skin, not eating pork or eating it (cows, shrimps, dogs, horses), drinking wine, vodka, marrying several persons, or just one. Or just feel together. Singing songs, dancing the same way, dressing, fucking, shitting, pissing… Eating with a knife, and fork or with sticks…

What THE HELL IS IT THAT IS DISAPPEARING? Well, as a somewhat linguistically tending philosopher I would give some priority for nation-building to language, albeit a rather moderate priority. I feel closer to people speaking Swedish — or do I really? How much? Is it important?

In most deliberations on the notion of nation, at least one factor reoccurs: the role of cultural production, or culture in one of the wider senses of the term.

In actual reality the phenomenon which is said to be disappearing seems rather to be a reduction of the role of the artefact labelled the nation-state, or some aspects of the role that states have played in the last century, or perhaps even since the latest decline of feudalism begun, that is, during the “Renaissance”, somewhere around 1450, though feudalism had a slow and disparate downfall: the last small princes of Germany were deposed as late as in 1919… And farmers still were involved in more or less feudal micro-systems in Sweden as late as in the 1940s. And in some parts of the world, neither has feudalism of the medieval kind disappeared nor has the birth of the nation-state yet occurred. Back to pluralism again, the ever-returning enemy of generalisations in social or cultural theory.

Effects of globalisation

Globalisation is a two-way process or structure; both a dynamic and static understanding of the notion and its discursive surroundings are possible. Summarizing the effects of globalisation is a complex undertaking, and actually difficult to discern from its causes. This is not an uncommon phenomenon in scientific contexts; the idea of system, or functional dependence in feedback mechanisms, fundamental to biological explanations — and, more generally, the idea of teleological explanations, reverses the “ordinary” temporal order of cause and effect (cf. von Wright on teleological explanations in Explanation and Understanding). Accordingly, changes in in the sphere of cultural production, such as the media structure, might be explained as both causes and effects of globalisation. Some decades back, discussion about the cultural imperialism of the English-speaking states, in particular the USA, within Unesco and other international forums, demonstrated a very polarized way of treating a subject close to the current issue of globalisation.

190 Stalin’s linguistic favourite Marr, rather suggested that class is a factor behind language development and relatedness.
191 The system of “statate” which implied that part of the salary was “in natura”
192 Von Wright
193 Ulla Carlsson (Swedish) has given an excellent overview of the discussion on the New International Communication Order.
wherein media and culture were, mostly, conceived as a sector – a closed world: the analysis of discourses had not then reached international political forums.

Today, in post-Foucauldian social and cultural research, as has been argued above, separating the media as a system distinct from the social and political context as a whole¹⁹⁴, just as other cultural production is not feasible. The media system from about 1970, especially in its news and public affairs aspects, was firmly anchored in the Western ideological and political sphere, that is, in the just dismantled colonial powers. Still it was the only system, which offered an alternative and resistance to the many post-colonial dictatorial or authoritarian regimes, in those times more impenetrable to information than today.

The criticism which was, quite justly, launched against the dominance of Western media and culture was based on the claim that the post-colonial states (more or less independently of their democratic legitimacy) had a right to a national and/or cultural identity – the terminology oscillated characteristically according to the ethnic and cultural unity of the individual country concerned. This identity was successively more emphasized, as a necessary tool for the mobilisation of the economy and the society at large for development. The necessity of strengthening or shaping this (often inexistent or deficient) cultural (national) identity is still often brought up as an argument in favour of protectionism in one or several of the fields of Mind – in the extreme cases censorship. Also Unesco’s solemn proclamation in the beginning of its Charter¹⁹⁵ is used in support of this discourse.

For journalists and their employers, as well as the governments of the Western world it was easy to rebuke this kind of argument, by pointing to the hypocrisy of dictatorial states, since primarily only Western media reported in a critical and responsible vein about the Third World itself… The US and UK, viz. the states hosting the dominant media powers, exploited this argument to resist any attempt to reduce or counterbalance the dominance of Western media, including the cultural industries. The effects of globalisation, speaking the language of today, were declared as entirely positive. An intermediary position was taken by some Western countries, like France and by the Scandinavian states, where public opinion supported decolonisation, recognizing the need for independence from the cultural domination of the West, and the need for support from international cooperation agencies, like Unesco.

The debate reached its hottest stage in the discussion around the McBride report “Many voices – One world” in 1980. When the right wing and/or neo-liberal governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher took over in the major English-speaking countries, that is, the primary targets of criticism for “cultural imperialism”, the controversy deepened, ultimately leading to the retreat of these two states from Unesco, withdrawing one third of its resources.

The controversy over cultural imperialism also signified a more general disagreement of political ideologies and furnishes a historical background when trying to assess the phenomenon of globalisation today – primarily because it gives priority to cultural explanations before economic analyses. The growth of financial transactions (i.e. the background to the proposal for a “Tobin tax”), the delocalisation of industrial production to low-wage areas anywhere in the world, resulting in the de-industrialisation of Western societies, and the growing predominance of service and “experience” economies, implied that cultural production is revaluated in explanations of social change. The US and UK departures from Unesco – under ideological rhetoric, difficult to accept with for most other Western liberal democracies – might actually be regarded as a sign, slightly paradoxically, announcing the shift of importance of production sectors in the affluent societies, and also the growing importance attached to cultural production and exports by the dominant Anglo-Saxon powers.

¹⁹⁴ Though it seems that Niklas Luhmann tried to do so in his book from 1996, Die Realität der Massenmedien 2 ed. Luhmann might be regarded as a survivor from a Pre-Foucauldian era, with his strong emphasis on systems theory in a stricter sense, more inspired by life sciences than rhetorics and linguistics.

¹⁹⁵ Since wars begin in the minds of men, the bulwarks of peace must be constructed in the minds of men”
Actually, this rather spectacular process in the international political arena, already more than 25 years ago, might suggest a reversal of the classical analytical order of dependence between “base” and “superstructure” outlined by Marx and Engels, to say that “ideal” or cultural production have a “base” role for social change, rather than the “material” production. One might of course ask whether financial flows are “material” or “ideal” – particularly in an era where just a fraction of these flows is payment for goods or services, the overwhelming part being monetary transactions, buying liquid capital for liquid capital, or even more abstract values, such as securing currency risks, that is, buying money risks for money… And liquid money does not even exist more than in the form of bank accounts in a computer…. To say that money is “matter” may have been rather natural in Marx’s time, but today? Marx was familiar, as a philosopher, with the notion of value in its diverse uses (both ethical values and economic values, such as exchange value, utility value etc.) – but does the notion of value not *per se* presuppose a kind of distance to “hard things”? A value is, whatever its “objective” status might be, something which always involves a valuation, that is, an act of construction, it is an artefact, essentially a collective artefact. Values did not exist before the advent of living creatures in the universe – whether these creatures must be human might be disputable.

After these general remarks on cultural production and its reversed role related to globalisation, some more specific observations on selected fields of cultural production will be suggested.

**Cultural production fields and globalisation**

**The arts: the music industry case - rights, persons and authors**

The music industry offers, in a number of respects, a model when discussing globalisation *in cultural production* and cultural production as an agent for globalisation.

The music industry is an *industry*, that is, standardized mass production, organised in the major part of the world on a market economy basis. It did, after books and press, together with film and photography, as mass-produced entertainment industry, radically change the structure of music production, distribution, consumption and performance.

It is a *cultural* industry, that is, its products being primarily copies of immaterial objects, “exemplars” of *works*, that in themselves are immaterial, that is, not situated in a particular place or time. Works in this sense are, solemnly formulated, “eternal”, since they do not “die”, but they are “born”. There are other immaterial products, which do not necessarily fall under the description of cultural (ordinary patented products etc.), and there are lots of cultural products that are not immaterial, both as “copies” of “originals” and “exemplars” of a *work*. Both works and copies are artefacts, i.e. not “natural” products.

The development of the music industry is, moreover, a show-case for how processes of concentration, fusions of companies, monopolisation or oligopolisation have been going on since 80 years. The industry has, from the outset, been international, or globalised, a small number of dominant companies have – for long and often – had an oligopolistic control of the world market, frequently about 80 %.

The latest development in this industry – in the era of Internet (which deserves a separate treatment, in its partially anarchic, commercial-non-commercial structure[196]) seems to overthrow the entire power structure of established dominant companies and conglomerates - in which today the principal companies are integrated. The very possibility of really establishing a “free flow of information” as far as music recordings are concerned seems to be round the corner, simply because digital technology and communication networks have been developing so quickly, caus-

---

196 Cf Patrik Wikström and information from the World Internet Institute
ing a havoc in the music industries. Outcries for the “protection of rights” in new stricter copyright regulations, desperate attempts to construct new technical obstacles to copying or transmitting messages and content over the Web bear witness to the confusion and anxiety of the music industry.\textsuperscript{197}

As reported\textsuperscript{198}, the countries that have been most willing to follow the outcries for protectionist measures from the music and media conglomerates, e.g. USA and Denmark, seem to have had the most remarkable fall in sales of CDs, viz. the products that are still controlled by the oligopolistic trans-national music industry.

The protection of copyright/authors’ rights played a central role in the music industry – as in the film and video/TV entertainment industry. The different philosophical\textsuperscript{199} attitudes behind the Continental European vs. the Anglo-Saxon models of protecting producers, or the rights-holding companies, from competition and, consequently, a “free flow” of cultural works, lead to controversies in the international organisations, and bilaterally between the EU and US. The US/UK copyright is basically a right that is completely transferable from the author to other persons, legal or physical, while European traditions reserves some rights for the author even after transfer of economic interests. The Anglo-Saxon model obviously serves the interests of all the “intermediaries” between the creators and the consumers better than the European model. This is also the basis for the widespread scepticism among the general public for the sometimes pathetic arguments from the industry, pretending to safeguard the position of the authors, performers and creators, but in reality protecting the interests and profits of huge trans-national corporations. One might conclude, somewhat maliciously, that in the USA, corporations and other legal persons are regarded as “persons” in a more pregnant sense than in Europe. This might be regarded as an expression of “feudalism”, in the sense that corporations are given a greater autonomy and influence in social life.\textsuperscript{200} In the media area, in Europe, also some “corporate” influence is recognized, but of a non-commercial character: in the Netherlands public broadcasting was built upon the principle of a division of influence between the major religious and philosophical communities of that country. In the German state of Nordrhein–Westfalen the private radio system programming is built on a division of interest between social groupings of that state, and the commercial sector. This division pertains perhaps more to the programme ingredients beside music, but is crucial to the profiles of these companies\textsuperscript{201}.

In an age of increased organizational complexity, where cultural production is being subdivided into numerous steps driven by economic interests, this difference might be of crucial importance. In European law, companies, legal persons, could be, for example, punished, for a variety of reasons. Punishment is a reaction to a person given responsibility or proclaimed guilty of some offence. In EU law break of competition regulations, cartel agreements etc. could result in fines for legal persons\textsuperscript{202}. But other cases exist, such as in Sweden, where a company could be fined for the distribution of illegal violent video pornography.

Since a company cannot be put into jail, beaten or killed in the electric chair, the way of punishing a legal person is economic. Since the idea of a “société anonyme” – the backbone of all capitalist enterprise – is that the legal person is separated from the physical persons, the owners or executives of companies are rarely put into jail as physical persons, although some economic and environmental crimes do have these consequences.

The relations between persons in these two senses might symbolise the kind of transition from material production economy to a culturally dominated structure. Differences between the

\textsuperscript{197} Cf. Söderberg (2007).
\textsuperscript{198} Roger Wallis: oral communication in Norrköping seminar Sept 2 2004, Cf. also other reports by Wallis.
\textsuperscript{199} The idea behind any kind of patent, author’s right or copyright is of course to safeguard a monopoly for the author of a product, that is, to avoid competition for a certain period.
\textsuperscript{200} In ancient systems of vote in many countries, the weight of the vote was also proportional to the property owned by the voter – power was “corporate” in a literal sense.
\textsuperscript{201} Cf. website of Landesanstalt für Medien Nordrhein-Westfalen.
\textsuperscript{202} In the media world the judgement towards Microsoft resulted in one of the largest fines of the Union.
two spheres of copyright/author’s right also pertain to the “neighbouring rights” area, that is, the area regulated by the Rome Convention on performers’ rights (Oct 26 1961). This convention is not ratified by the USA - which means that US copyrighted music is cheaper to broadcast all over the world.

In the controversies in Unesco and other international bodies between defenders of the “free flow of information” – that is, the Western governments and commercial and civil corporate organisations – and other countries which argue that the copyright protection system obstructs the transfer or free flow of cultural and scientific products, the logic in the Western position is not striking. The struggles between music and film rights holding companies and the millions of people who download copyright protected material do not, to use an understatement, bear witness of a glowing interest in a free flow of cultural material on the part of Western democracies. The word ‘free’ is notoriously ambiguous in the English language: imagine that a country boasts of having “free education”, and this means charging fortunes for attending schools.

The music industry, and generally, the entertainment business, represent an attitude radically different from the traditions organising, since the beginning of human scholarly endeavours, the realm of scientific research; viz. the fundamental principle of “communism” of ideas and discoveries. This manifests the fact that the protection of corporate privileges of cultural products is not a “natural monopoly”. The protection of ideas – mysteries - is, on the other hand, characteristic of another sphere of cultural production, viz. myth, religion and secret societies.

That some kind of protection or privilege to authors is a reasonable and just way of providing self-employed creative workers with a living might seem undisputable, but the present complex control over cultural production by business conglomerates defies logic and equity, as well as most universally held ethical principles of social justice. It constitutes an emblematic example of the “re-feudalisation” of a global society in the sense indicated. These companies interact with other social institutions, notably with states, and with persons elected to serve these institutions, as well as other persons, self-elected or just ordinary tyrants, also acting on behalf of states on the political arena. It is no wonder that the power of these operators have also lead to – in exploitation of the technological development – a world-wide rebellion towards their positions, both in practical terms by pirate-copying being a constant and, it seems indefatigable, ingredient in musical life, as well as in theory or legal discourse where the notion of “CopyLeft”\textsuperscript{203} and other kinds of alternative collective systems of administering the trade of cultural products have been proposed, and, to a modest degree, practised. The conditions in and for the music industry (as of cultural industries in general) are comparable to those of other major industries like pharmaceuticals where immaterial property rights are central to the structure and economic strategies\textsuperscript{204}.

\textbf{Media}

The “geographical” aspects of change – condensed in the notion of “globalisation” – are also “political”, in the following way, among others.

The arts, for example as represented by the music, film or television industry, are, for their economic aspects, “mediatized”; those parts of the arts that are not immediately mediatized, but still involve major economic transactions, like arts trade (Sotheby’s and Christie’s), may offer spectacular money-rolling, but still remain rather marginal in comparison with the cultural industries. On the other hand, the traditional mass media tend to involve more and more design and “aesthetic” aspects, and what is more important: the power structures of these two sectors tend to amalgamate, media companies traditionally centred on news and information tend to differentiate, going into entertainment and the arts (like film, music recordings etc.). Any analysis of the

\textsuperscript{203} Cf web-sites of Richard Stallman and others
\textsuperscript{204} This role has been exposed by the previous (fired) CEO of Pfizer, Peter Rost, both in books and public presentations – in Radio Sweden P1 July 30, 2007 for example.
mass media industry in the narrow sense, viz. newspapers, periodicals and broadcasting, from the point of view of globalisation, has to take this into account.

Taking Bourdieu’s critical approach to television as a point of departure one is obliged to draw a demarcation line between the media and other forms of cultural production, if anything meaningful as to the relation between the two spheres should be said. Bourdieu’s positions are, clearly, not quite worked out in a scholarly manner, and certainly not undisputable either on a more general level, as indicated. Generally, his position manifests the difficulty of drawing a demarcation line between cultural production, or culture in general, and other forms of production and social life in general. Still, if anything meaningful should be said in terms of social changes under the label of “culturalisation” or the like – and I subscribe to the necessity of employing this mode of description – some kind of “sectorisation” has to be made.

The mass media sector, at least for some parts of it, like television and news distribution, might be advanced as a paradigm case for globalisation, both as a cause and as effect. The image of a “spiral” Media>globalisation>media-globalised> globalising more ….might be suggested, describing a social process of change, involving practically all parts of the world, from the level of top executives, and other serious men dressed in dark suits, down to the basic structures of families and groups in both affluent and poor regions of this planet.

Just some examples of the causes:

- The transfer of economic resources in a rapidly accelerating rhythm involving both real resources and the astronomic sums of speculative finance liquid capital in currency exchange transactions etc. presupposes that the information on real capital has become immediate and generally available in every corner of the earth. Though a lot of the financial information is by nature secret – otherwise the profits of speculators would not be possible – the general base of economic information is necessarily public, since it forms a background to all other activities, legal, half-legal and illegal.

- The political opinions involved in most strategic and war actions by military actors in the world presuppose an exchange of information on a world scale. Though already possible by earlier technology - the telegraph in the 19th C made immediate transfer of information possible to a restricted number of actors - it is generalised by present media only, that is, radio and television first of all. Political and military action (such as Western intervention Iraq or Afghanistan) could not have been realised without logistic support from public opinion in at least some of the countries and populations backing the invaders. The explanation of the Soviet failure in Afghanistan, as well as the US defeat in Vietnam in the 1970s must take the mass media international or global involvement as a basic factor. The same could be said about the overthrow of the Shah regime in Iran by the Islamist movements.

Effects

- One of the most salient features of social change after the end of the cold war is the dismantlement of obstacles to the global trans-national media production export. Though the dominance of the US film and phonogram industry is nothing new, the breaking down of international barriers to cultural trade meant a new opening up of markets to Anglo-Saxon audio-visual products, firstly from the US but also UK. The hurdles for the break-down of national restrictions to cultural imports have not been entirely won by the US and UK industries and governments, but the dominant role conceded to the US within the World Trade Organisation and its process of negotiations on rights and on trade in services are all to be seen in the light of the globalisation process in the mass media sector. The US market is essentially a closed market to external cultural products, since the dominance of domestic actors on this market constitutes at least as strong a protection to external competition as formal trade restrictions. The deregulatory movement is thus rather unidirectional, a fact of which the concerned governments of course are aware, though diversity of positions and interests are often couched in more general
terms, such as in the relatively fresh Unesco convention of the “diversity of cultural expressions”.

- Concurrently with the breaking down of general protective mechanisms for internal national cultural productions, the change of ownership in the media structure becomes more and more directed towards global structures – again mostly controlled by US business interests. Since the US domestic media market is becoming rapidly oligopolised and even, in some respects (local radio and press), monopolised – as is testified by numerous studies since Ben Bagdikian’s first edition of “The Media Monopoly” or earlier (Herbert Schiller and others) the force of the globalisation movement is enhanced. Although daily news production in broadcasting and the press still is predominantly national, networks like the CNN, news agencies, the Murdoch-controlled Sky/Fox/News Corp.-network205, AOL-Times-Warner and other actors are constantly present as purveyors of news used and recycled by many local agents. This influence is hardly possible to overestimate – the mechanisms of selection, both of “gate-keeping” in the sense of choosing the news items to be featured at any given moment, and more subtly, of choosing the appropriate language in reporting, are too well-known to be neglected.

- In some, so far rather exceptional, cases global reporting has recently slipped out of the control of major US/Western actors – the best known may be Al Jazeera, the Arab, oil-financed, satellite TV channel, and some small news agencies footed on interests like environmental conservation, or political minorities. The range of the effects of Internet is still difficult to evaluate, or perhaps difficult to over-estimate! – but weak market positions do not disappear just because of the new technology.

- The most powerful exception to the globalised media industry control of the media is, still, the state-controlled or public sector. The picture is differentiated: In the US, the earlier rather strong network of public broadcasting has been marginalised and in countries like Canada and Australia it is severely cut down. The tradition of public service broadcasting in Europe, though struggling for its position in a strong wave of Neo-Liberal or market-oriented trend in both the European Union and on a national level, is still rather strong, also on a world scale – notably in the form of the big media institutions of the former colonial powers, the UK and France. In those parts of the world, where state-controlled media still mean censorship and/or intervention in the daily content production, two trends are visible: the marginalisation of public media in most East and Central European new democracies is paralleled by some interesting alliances between private global media actors and authoritarian or dictatorial regimes. The best known example may be the agreement between China and Rupert Murdoch, to the effect that his satellite package in China excluded the BBC. Also in countries like India, where a strong, semi-authoritarian state dominance in the media prevailed for long, private interests (such as News Corp.) have made incursions – opening up the information structure, although, naturally, concurrently commercialising it.

Legal norms production

For the sake of indicating the lack of clear demarcation between diverse fields of cultural production some examples from the legal field will be cited, though no detailed analysis of this field of cultural production will be attempted.

- In legal cultural production the most clear-cut example of the “geographical” change alluded to in terms of globalisation is the renegotiation of the copyright/author’s rights, and related changes in trade regulations. This renegotiation process takes place both in the UN system (WTO, the Berne Union organisation, WIPO), and in organisations like the OECD, which is not a formal decision-making body, but very influential as an agent for analysis, information exchange, negotiations and harmonisation of positions between the affluent countries – and of course, also, numerous collective non-governmental bodies on a corporate or professional level. The national and European (EU) legislative
processes are deeply influenced by this process. The process has not, so far, come to a definite end, as indicated by the debates on the “cultural exception”, but the pressure from the private industry and the US administration, both for the adaptation of European immaterial rights legislation to the Anglo-Saxon copyright model, and for the abolition of protective measures in the field of cultural policies, is very tough. Professional organisations and rights-holders collecting societies take a somewhat ambivalent position – both defending the instruments of copyright and other rights as a basic form of remuneration of cultural production, but also, in some cases, remaining counterparts to big business interests. By and large European institutions and regulations tend to adapt to the US claims. The attempts to establish, in the field of copyright, some kind of counterpart to the openness-of-ideas-principle which still pervades most basic scholarly production (sometimes referred to as a principle of “scientific communism”, or common property) have remained marginal (“Copyleft”, “Licence Art Libre”, Wikipedia etc.). On the more general level of patents, “Linux” is a successful example. It is, however, abundantly clear that globalisation has also extended the range of unauthorized copying and distribution of protected works – simply because the legal network of international copyright is not capable of controlling the billions of people exploiting new copying technologies. The support of public bodies in many poor countries for reinforcing the international formal structure is not, in an understatement, enthusiastic.

• The last aspect relates to a more general consequence (or cause!) of globalisation of cultural production – though it is not directly related to “cultural” in the narrower senses of the arts, media or the cultural heritage. This is the increased consolidation of global criminal interests. The struggle against economic illegal cooperation, for example in drug trade, tax-escape and whitewashing of money, has serious difficulties keeping abreast with the criminal organisations. The general trend for liberalisation on a national level, by slackening controls, opening borders and generally promoting international flows, also implies the production of international regulations for financial transactions and transfer of ownership of real, material and immaterial property, has also benefited illegal transactions. The kind of new “normativity” facilitating illegal transactions is not an explicit, intended or public kind of cultural production, but a consequence. Nevertheless it is obvious that new structures and norms of action are built into the new systems of trade and production.

• Major international corporations of accountancy and banking (mostly US-based) play a pivotal role in the globalisation of transfer of property. They are not universally involved in illegal transactions – though obviously one of the most prominent of these companies, namely Arthur Andersen, clearly was. Still the network of international information systems controlled by the large accountancy and banking firms is a crucial power factor on a global scale, though rarely noted in public debates. The circulation of information between different participants in these networks is obviously a delicate matter, since they examine the accounts of the biggest companies of the world. It is likely, though of course rather speculative, that the necessity of secrecy has to be balanced against the advantage of being part of a world-scale information network. As such it does also, presumably, influence strongly on the production of legal norms for international transactions. Since most of these accountancy and banking firms are not organised as integrated companies but as networks of formally independent firms or individual actors under a common trade name, the analogy to criminal organisations might be not to far-fetched, in organisational terms. The networks of the deceased firm Arthur Andersen and Cosa Nostra may merit a comparative study. (Cf. Strange).

Science

The sphere of cultural production in which knowledge is, in a pregnant sense, the most or only valuable asset, viz. scientific research - in the wide sense of science, covering also the social and cultural sciences, humanities etc. – has prima facie always been globalised, albeit insights in the achievements of Chinese science and Indian grammar have come late in the West. Scholarly re-
search by tradition has, in the academic “free” sphere, open and “common property”. Nobel prizes have been awarded without, at least formally, paying regard to the nationality of the winners and thus are by definition globalised. Obviously the discourses, traditions, habits and competences of the juries selecting prize-winners set limits. In later years a compact dominance of US winners marks the dominance of US production: physics, chemistry, economics – in distinction from literature or peace…

An omnipresent vector of globalisation - language

A rapid movement is perceivable, however, perhaps more radical than the other changes. It may be disputable to employ the notion of globalisation in this sphere, since the change is so clearly linked to one sole sphere of cultural production, viz. the major English-speaking powers: the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

This major change in the degree of global scientific – along with most other cultural - production associates to Ernst Cassirer’s definition of culture, which includes language. In the last decades English has become the almost universal language used, for natural and social sciences and technology. This change has immense consequences – notably if the results of most contemporary analysis of linguistic philosophy, discourse analysis, rhetoric, semiotics, intertextuality and cultural scholarly work in general are taken into account. It is obvious that – taking the classical scholarly area of philosophy as an example – the coining of terminology, concepts and semantic relations, definitions and therefore also logically exact relations, in one or the other language determines the range and content of research. In Western philosophy Greek, Latin, Arab, Latin, French, German have dominated conceptual creativity and analysis over a period of 2400 years, English being used as one of several languages from the 17th C. In much scholarly work Latin remained, long after its universal use in the Middle Ages in Europe, the medium used. The proliferation of English to the entire scientific community outside the (North)Western sphere is a phenomenon which is not possible to overestimate. This is, obviously, a cultural change, not a material one.

In the sequel of this omnipresent change – a vector and a consequence of globalisation alike – the specific aspect of “scholarly media production” might be highlighted.

• The publication structure of scientific articles and books have been gradually more integrated into the structure of media companies as such – implying a growing standardisation of formats of publication, of scrutiny of peer reviews, and an increasing international character of people involved in editing and consulting scientific magazines. Although the number of publications has become just impossible to grasp for the individual researcher, the control over the international publishing market is – along with other processes of amalgamation and fusions – becoming gradually more concentrated to fewer hands. The digitization of scientific publications – which presupposes that criteria of quality control become universally standardized – will reduce the costs of publishing houses, though at the same time shifting control mechanisms over production from physical aspects (printing shops, staff etc.) to more immaterial aspects, such as market positions, renown for a forum of publication of new results etc. Printing-on-demand becomes, theoretically, more feasible and hence electronic publications might increasingly be an alternative to expensive physical publications. In theory this development should open up for newcomers on the market, and even for individually edited publications by individual researchers. Nothing of this seems, despite some rather panic-stricken publisher reactions, to have taken place yet. Instead the reinforcement of existing structures of control and quality assessment seems to have been the result, along with a process of concentration of ownership and a gradual sell-out of traditional firms to general financial investment interests.
TECHNOLOGY: DIGITIZATION

Most changes linked to cultural production today are dependent on the introduction of digital technology and the proliferation of this technology over several fields of production, both material and cultural. This affects consumers in the affluent part of the world but also to a significant degree in the poorer part of the world. For two examples: China is the biggest market for mobile telephones and South Africa has one of the largest concentrations of the same telephones.

Digitisation is a consequence of technical developments, notably of semi-conductors, but is also, significantly, dependent on theoretical innovations of an abstract nature, such as those of the logician Alan Turing (1912-1954), but also Lull, Pascal, Leibniz, Frege, Russell and other pioneers of formal symbolic, mathematical logic.206 The theory of Shannon and Weaver, often labelled “information theory”, should also be included in the theoretical underpinning of digitalisation, but the “immaterial” or “ideal” nature of its roots are crucial. That is, cultural production, in the form of philosophical and logical work, has revolutionised contemporary society in a fundamental manner again, illustrates the fact that the relationship between “base” and “superstructure” is often the reverse from that which Marx and Engels proposed, a development which might, accordingly, suggest a position of “dialectical idealism” instead of “materialism”.

Another “dialectics” is, however, also present in this context: despite the emphasis given above to “ideal” or “cultural” production, but in fact illustrating the circumstance that technology – or artefacts, like technical inventions and developments have made theoretical progress possible and given inspiration to a number of new, extremely abstract, ways of thinking or solutions of age-old problems207. Mathematical devices and machines are perhaps the best illustration of this interface man-machine, which has, in the recent two decades revolutionised all kinds of communication, information storage and retrieval, distribution and copying of messages and other kinds of “content”.

Most of the traditional media continue to exist, but none of them remain untouched by digital technology.

Just as the entire production of material goods has radically changed by robotisation, automatisation, CAD-CAM-technology etc., one might imagine what would happen to public administration, police and military, banking and business, if all computers should just stop working. The panic tendencies around the millennium shift 2000 are just a small starter to what might happen in a real case… The elimination of large numbers of office staff, which used to be required for typing manuscripts, printing etc. has deeply changed social structures, just as automatization in industry reduced drastically the number of people employed in manufacture. Actually the “working-class” itself is on the verge of disappearing in affluent societies – unless redefined as including the growing number of people in the service sector, working in a subordinate or precarious positions.209 Despite raised standards of living, differences have not really been reduced as a consequence of increased affluence, often the contrary. Income structure in the US is an often cited example: for US wage earners, the majority of the population, incomes has been stagnant or even, according to some analysts, gone down, during the last two decades, while the number of millionaires and billionaires has mushroomed in the same time, as has concentration of wealth to these few.

One of the most fundamental effects of digitization on cultural production is its integrative transformation of all kinds and stages of communication activities, in journalism, in the arts and in scientific production.

206 The economist and logician WS Jevons also constructed a “logical piano”.
207 The solution of Fermat’s famous theorem, posed in the 17th century, is one of these, in pure mathematics. It has only been solved with the help of computers.
208 All these institutions represent – looking from an “anthropological” angle - cultural production...
209 This definition coincides with one of the criteria provided by Marx himself, that is, class as a relative positions of ruling respectively serving or exploited strata of society.
It is not always possible to predict where the transformation is going to be most important. For example, a couple of years ago great expectations and great tension surrounded the digitisation of television. Slow introduction, and difficulties in convincing viewers of the need and value for money of a huge extension of the choice of television channels has to some extent calmed down spirits. Moreover, the extension of the services over the Internet, growing band-width etc. has – though the change of technology in TV is imminent, turned away attention somewhat from Electronic Programme Guides etc. All in all, so far, digitization of television – despite apprehensions – does not seem to affect habits very much. In general, the rapid extension of entertainment on the Internet and related interactive services seem to have provoked a decrease, at least in some age groups, of the interest in television, despite the considerable expansion of supply.

**Technology and art**

The introduction of digital technology in music and video recording, has – as noted already – brought about a restructuring of distribution of music. Every teenager nowadays, in the rich part of the world, is able to download MP3 or other digitally formatted files and, despite efforts to criminalize this use, it is unlikely that this practice will stop, before some kind of informal acceptance of the economic aspirations of intermediate operators in the production chain has been gained among users. This should be no surprise since the Internet is generally perceived as some kind of public space, just as the streets and squares of a city. As soon as band-width is sufficient for ordinary people – which is imminent in most corners of the affluent societies - some kind of negotiated agreement between the general public and the business world will have to be reached. Whether this means that the golden days of the cultural industries are over, or of the select few creators who profit from the control over copying cultural products is hard to say. In the cultural field – notably the arts – governing bodies tend to accept the demands of business interests, probably in the hope (or sometimes quite substantiated belief) that income from these industries will play an important part in the public economies, or at least reinforce export statistics.

The outcome of the battle over the control of copying and distribution over the Internet is as yet not settled in favour of rights-holders, large media conglomerates etc. Breaking codes of decryption has become not more difficult than inventing them. The battles for new or reinforced regulation may be, normally, won by the established business interests, in close association with political and administrative circles (in the EU, in the US etc.), but there also seems to be an in-built trend in digital technology, which liberates consumers from constraints set by producers, proprietors and distributors. You might name this development a “liberal” progress, since it promotes the liberty of the individual user against powerful corporate interests, an “anarchistic” progress, since it favours the disobedience of rules laid down by regular administrative and legislative bodies, or, finally, a “communist” victory, since it establishes a kind of non-commercial community of property, already prevailing in one major part of the “realm of mind”, viz. scientific research….and spreading to other spheres, as illustrated by “Copyleft” and the entire process of downloading.

By and large, the public debate and the considerations of public administrations tend to swing between more pessimistic and more optimistic perspectives – both as to the consequences for the general public or consumers and for the producers, in diverse steps of the production chain, from the author or creator to the ultimate links in the distribution chain.

Technology and art may appear to be rather distinct areas of human production. As noted, the first is an area of production which poses questions as to the adequacy of a demarcation line between material and cultural production: technology is both a field for human knowledge, inventions, creation and design, and crucial to the development of any change in the material production patterns. Frontier zones between technology and art, such as architecture, are obviously both cultural and material production zones.
And, trivially, “art” might also include faculties and traditions primarily serving need other than “aesthetic” ones. Engineering is sometimes presented as an “art”, just like other “techniques” – such as waging a war, or, in Macchiavellian terms, managing a society (a company, an organisation) or a state.

A quick glance at art, in the more colloquial sense, of the “fine arts”, tells us that digitization also has changed much of its structure. Both production, for example writing books on computers, composing music, mixing and producing records, and films, designing works of art and architecture, making films, etc. are deeply impregnated by digital technology – to the degree that this circumstance is becoming as commonplace as telephones, pens, cars - that is, ignored. Paradoxically, thus, the specificity of digitization may disappear in this light. To perceive the change it is useful to step back and remind ourselves of the situation prevailing in these contexts just two decades ago, before the personal computers...

**Media**

Normally, when digitization is discussed, media, in the narrower sense of mass media and inter-personal media (such as computer communication, telephones etc.), will be in focus. Bourdieu’s thesis on the grasp of power of the media represents a more generalised version of this focus, to say that the media (incarnated by television) penetrate most other forms of cultural production, to the point of reshaping them in their fashion...

This view may be footed on two aspects of digital technology, which both may be labelled “versatility”.

1. The capacity of digital media content to be recycled and used several times for diverse distribution channels. “Windowing”\(^{210}\) is a well-known concept in video/film production, where one show or one film might be presented in a strategic sales chain, such as to include, for example, cinema, television, pay-television, video rentals, Internet distribution etc.

2. The increased possibility to separate diverse levels and ingredients of production since digital technology allows for much simpler cuttings, transformations, deformations, additions etc. the stages of a cultural production process are easy to establish as particular products, facilitating sales and purchases of parts that would otherwise be integrated into wholes.

We encounter numerous battles in the journalistic or other “content production” fields of the media precisely because of this new technology: when someone writes a text, it could be recycled, cut into pieces, presented in a printed paper, on a web-site together with images, sounds or whatever. If a journalist is employed to write in one newspaper, should she or he not be paid extra for the publication in other media of the same company, etc.? Definitions of borderlines between one product and the other remind of the intricate hair-splitting disputes of scholastic theology. One case is the discussion in the European Union over the definition of “European production”, decisive for the central clause in the EU legislation on television, prescribing that a majority of the television programming transmitted in the Union should be of European origin. How many US, or extra-EU, workers could be put on the pay-list in order for a film or television show to qualify for the label “European origin”?

The digital revolution affects the media so deeply that a discussion of media without referring to digitization is pointless – and reversely: the singling out of media as one field of cultural production to be examined apart has become narrow-minded. The consequences for Bourdieu’s general thesis of media power may also turn out to be confusing, is the presence of mass media and their relations to other forms of cultural production more surprising than the presence of telephones or motor cars in contemporary societies?

\(^{210}\) Cf. Gillian Doyle (2003) for a condensed presentation of this phenomenon
Legal norm production

“Content is king” is a slogan often presented in commercial context when it comes to the effects of digitization linked to the diverse aspects of versatility of digital technology, enabling it to integrate diverse forms of production built on its capacity to reproduce one model or mode exactly. One might even say that digital technology has given, in this respect, a new sense to the old Platonic and Aristotelian idea of “form”, as distinct from content (matter). Reproduction in digital technology means that exactly the same form – not a similar one – is reiterated. In German one distinguishes between gleich (exactly like) and ähnlich (similar). Actually, specifically in cultural production, digitisation challenges the division between original and copy, since all copies are “equally valid” – that is, original. This has deep-going effects on the legal system of immaterial rights, constructed on the idea that it is possible to single out one original (a “master”) and all the other versions as copies. The idea of a “work” becomes, slightly surprisingly, however, more valid, since it is not possible to single out just one exemplar, or token, as the work – we have to realize that a work is never identical with its copies. Instead the work is the “form” or “type”, not the individual material “tokens” of that form… This is becoming an even more visible fundament of legislation of cultural production, which is, traditionally, part of “immaterial” law.

One might, on a biological level, perceive an analogous problem posed by the phenomenon of cloning. At least on a theoretical level an individual animal having exactly the same genetic properties, in every cell, as another individual is not “individual” in the sense usually associated to that term. Although technology is not as developed yet, one might ask whether “Dolly” and her clones are the same animal or not. Spatial separation and distance is not always a basis for individualisation, as many cases of territorial struggles demonstrate. Individualisation is obviously a terminological question, but one that has to be solved in a legal context – as is clearly demonstrated by transplantation surgery cases, which gave rise to a new conception of the death of an individual person, in a legal sense.

“Content” in the media context is affected by the versatility of digital technology in many ways, both by the difficulty of separating an original from the copy, and the difficulty of establishing how many components of one content are required to constitute the same content. The difficulties in German legislation to determine ownership regulations for television channels present a similar case: how much of the actual shares of one television company should be considered as being controlled by an owner in order for ownership regulation to be applied – and if this application prescribes that the channel in question should – to counter media concentration – include a certain proportion of programmes produced externally, how large proportions of these programme products could be tolerated to be controlled by the owners of the channel concerned... There seems to be an endless chain of complications – all depending on the versatility of digital production allowing for endless divisions, new combinations of constituents etc.

Digitisation, in many ways blows up the fundament of immaterial property, and law. It demonstrates that this kind of law rests on number of presuppositions, which are not valid any more. Although digitisation increases, in general terms, drastically the scope of human control over “nature” it also reduces the control made possible by the possession of one “master” of a cultural work, and blurs the notion of original. At least in music contexts every performance becomes an original and the copy or recording of a work is also an original, instead of the “idea” held, or score written, by some one composer.
Politics: power and the mediatisation of the cultural production sphere

If globalisation, digitisation and mediatisation are three major changes affecting cultural production, as well as social structures as a whole, and these three processes are categorised as governing respectively geographical, technological and political dimensions of society, the last aspect, the political one, comes out as perhaps the most difficult to single out. Power structures, the subject of this study, are, habitually, categorized as political.

A note of caution should be sounded here. The notions “power” (in a sense excluding the physical notion of power) and political power are not synonymous. The slogans that “everything is political” may have some sense in pointing at some relations between human contexts and the society surrounding them. But just as a distinction has to be made between any class of objects and the relations this class has to other classes of objects, it is necessary to separate between political power and possible power relations in other senses. Political power is one kind of power.

The notion of political has, of course, to be defined in order to get some order in these contexts. This will be done in a subsequent section of this inquiry. Encyclopaedic definitions range from the narrower institutional concepts to a more general definition where political is just the manner of ruling. The nouns employed in the English language—“politics” and “policy” respectively—indicate to some extent the narrower and wider notions of “political”, and, accordingly notions of power “Ruling” might also be defined differently, but power relations between a master and a slave, inside a family, between lovers, a master and an animal, though normally touched upon by and regulated in a culture or a legal structure, could nevertheless not normally be identified with governing a state, a local or regional territory etc. Indefinitely many boundary cases might be pointed at, such as the power structures of organisations, armies, corporations, churches—where the more general sense of the notion of political applies.

With these cautionary notes, the political dimension of society as being taken over by “mediatisation” might be taken as one of the tenets of Bourdieu’s criticism of television. It has also, however, a much wider range, than Bourdieu’s complaints of the intrusion and dominance of the media over other cultural production spheres. “Mediatisation” is then taken to characterise the entire social development structure, also outside of what might be understood as cultural production. A corollary is, if this description is largely accepted, that the entire social development structure is, also one impregnated by cultural production, more than before. Mediatisation is, in this sense, one of the aspects of “culturalisation” of society, in its turn a notion which requires a distinction between society and culture in order to make sense, that is, a not too wide concept of culture.

Art

From this “political” point of view a salient part of the mediatisation process in art might be summarized as a “marketisation”. Market mechanisms in the arts before the entry of modern electronic media existed in the form of art trade, publishing houses and sales, instrument trade, material trade for painters and obviously architects. The art business was, however, more a trade and not an industry in a pregnant sense—reproduction of images and texts were rather small undertakings until the last part of the 19th C when printing technology allowed for mass production of texts, and photography made wide proliferation of pictures possible. The phenomenon of large editing houses marked a first step of marketisation but still the arts in the artisan sense dominated the scene—a scene, which remained rather small.

Art as a political force became notable as the Communist and Nazi regimes in Europe mobilised artists and gave support to industrial reproduction, as well as organised and censored production for the benefit of their own objectives and to keep the dynamics going.
of the arts – as spectacles for the people – was a well-known policy already in the Roman Republic (the Gracchi brothers).

Walter Benjamin was, as noted, a pioneer in reflecting upon the role of the arts in the age of mass reproduction and distribution – conscious of its role as a propaganda instrument but primarily as a genuine expression of the “aspirations of the masses” and a forum for a democratic era. And the notion of “mediatisation” is not an inadequate expression for his more optimistic than critical stand. Benjamin was, however, in accordance with his Marxist convictions, far from defending a position where the popular expression was accepted as a production dominated by commercial forces.

This perspective was already existent and dominant in those sectors of the art where reproduction rapidly gained terrain, viz. phonograms and film. Actually, already in the earliest stages of a stable technological base for production, around the 1920s, concentration of economic resources was a dominant feature of both the film and phonogram markets. The choices made by the governments in the already then dominant commercial market, the USA, were clearly oriented towards leaving business interests as unhampered as possible, and indeed expressed this policy as a policy of serving the American people, the public interest, in the best manner. The clearest expression of political choice was in the radio sector where the electronic frequency spectrum was (and still is) regarded as a public property, made available in the public interest to private operators. (Cf. MacChesney on public radio in the United States.)

Reactions from the traditional arts and intellectual circles towards mass-produced cultural objects were, as discussed above, harsh – typically Adorno and Horkheimer expressed, as European emigrants, a much more generally critical attitude to the entire phenomenon of an industrialised and market-dominated art sector than Benjamin’s more optimistic outlook.

The attitudes towards arts policies from European democratic governments after the Second World War to a great extent also reflect the critical attitude. The, relatively late, establishment of cultural policies was regarded as a counter-force to market mechanisms, and expressed as a political motive, sometimes couched as an educational perspective, sometimes as a support to more eternal objective quality objectives, sometimes a rather more patriotic idea of upholding national values – thus approaching the “mobilisation” aspect of the cultural policies of dictatorial regimes.

**Popular art, experience economy, populism**

The appearance of a political discussion of the kind touched upon above: the “politics of culture” in Bourdieu’s terms, may be regarded as an expression of a new variety of a critical debate over traditional support to art and cultural institutions. When the New Left dominated political discourse (1960-80) anti-market criticism joined a critique of the “elitism” of the cultural policies of European governments. Only the force of the new distribution technologies, with satellite television, LP records, video recorders, and, later, digital technology introduced an element which could harmonize with the general liberalisation of war-time restrictions, breaking down of customs barriers etc. gaining force in the 1980s. Marketisation of cultural production, including much of the fine arts, became a real alternative and was also accompanied by intellectual criticism of earlier cultural policies. This has already developed, in the context of the reactions expressed in the “cultural studies” movement.

On the public policy side the marketisation process is mostly still an unfinished affair – and the political expressions to continue this way are mostly rather mixed with earlier motives in cultural policies.

This amounts to, or could amount to, a crisis for the traditional conception of cultural policy, based on the presupposition that its main components are the fine arts support policy and

---

211 McChesney
protection of the cultural heritage. However, an indication of the stability of a traditional cultural policy concept was, however, the responses to questionnaire sent out to all National Commissions for Unesco on the occasion of the evaluation of the “Action Plan” on cultural policies adopted in 1998 by the Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers for Cultural Affairs in Stockholm. The Action Plan as such has not really left concrete traces in national policies, it is mostly seen as a kind of expression of a common attitude to cultural policies, and a step in a reflective process which might, on a long term lead to a change in the policies of national and international agents. The name “Plan of Action” might in this light – looking from a critical point of analysis – be a rather misleading title for a document that serves rather as a piece of reflection and analysis than something which leads to proposals and changes in current political action. The battle is not closed yet – a quite likely outcome is also restoration of public canons, public support systems, elite selection mechanisms, perhaps combined with an acceptance of commercial culture left to the market forces and even greeted as a vigorous contribution to new economies. The agonies of the intellectual analysis of cultural policies between a kind of “populist”, or simply democratic, acceptance of all forms of expressions, even if commercial, popular or mass-culture based, as genuine on one hand, and a criticism of both elitism of the dominant classes and the dominance of business interests of the cultural industries on the other, are likely to continue, perhaps as a useful remedy towards standstill and too stable ideological positions…?

Media – deregulation-reregulation

A clearer view of new political trends than in the arts “proper” is perceivable in the media sector in the narrow sense, viz. in the mass-media, that is, television, radio, Internet and the printed periodical media. Reasoning becomes less circular: if a central theme for the entire political field of change is mediatisation, media politics is easier to single out as a separate political area, invading other cultural production spheres.

The impetus of mediatisation from the point of view of the media sector itself, might be linked to the mantra of “deregulation” dominating Western policy-making during the last two decades. Neo-Liberalism (a slightly confusing denotation, since it is also linked to Neo-Conservatism) or market liberalism, pervaded also much of what used to be the opposite political camp, and was characterized by a retreat of the State, privatisation, individualism, a breakdown of the welfare state solidarity etc.

The term as such is a contradiction in terms – since the retreat of public influence, ownership or control over a public domain often means not a reduction of regulation but an increase. Public direct management requires less written rules, since the control established by the system or structure as such is sufficient. Similarly, if you own a piece of land or a house, nobody obliges you to set down any rules for its management, you just use it. But if you share your power, the requirement for regulation or agreement comes up rather soon.

A salient example in Europe is the public service broadcasting sector. When competition was introduced, with several actors on the air, both the public and the private operators needed regulations, and the sum total of regulatory interventions most likely increased. Regulations are negotiated for a certain political permanence – one of the keywords for neo-liberal economic policies is “framework” economy, the State giving long-lasting frameworks, leaving to the market or a plurality of diverse actors freedom within these frameworks. But these regulations are more than ever necessary, establishing infrastructural order in the economy.

The European Union is in general an example of this contradiction in terms of the notion of “deregulation”. In order to eliminate trade barriers and establish a common European single market all the customs regulations existing before had to be replaced by an immensely complicated system of common legislation on a variety of levels, regulating still existing national

---

212 Report prepared by Cavallin and Harding (2003, unpublished), responses which were not significant from a statistical point of view but still may be interpreted as a remarkably universal discourse.
regulations... European integration has brought about a wonderland for lawyers and in general shifted the balance of power from elected national governments to European central institutions, and lawyers. Deregulation may mean more freedom from constraints on individual entrepreneurs and companies but it also means less operational margins for elected politicians – having to adjust to an growing web of common rules and legal practice on the Union level. The introduction of more responsibilities for the directly elected European Parliament only marginally reduces this effect. Hence the debate of “democratic legitimacy” of the European institutions.

“Marketisation” as a major principle in media policies is a showpiece of the contradictions of the notion of deregulation. As everyone knows, the agri-cultural sector is in no way subject to the deregulation slogans, neither in the European Union, nor in the US-dominated other forums – there is a limit to deregulation after all.....

Going into some details of this showpiece of political changes, two principal movements might be observed in the media sector during the period following the Second World War, and the gradual demounting of war mobilization planned economies. They might illustrate the paradoxes of liberalisation and deregulation in a number of ways.

1 The concentration of ownership in the press and the gradual disappearance of competition on local, regional and in some cases also national levels of the written press, leaving most places with a practical monopoly situation in the daily press.

One drastic example is the Danish press structure, where very often four different dailies were competing, even in rather small markets. Another is provided by Walter Lippman’s early studies of subscriptions to newspapers in Chicago: a majority of households subscribing to newspapers had 2-4 papers! The concentration and monopolisation process in the written press has continued more or less continuously in Europe and America for 50 years, without any major interventions from the public authorities or the political sphere, although complaints were voiced already 40 years ago, for example in the Council of Europe.... Politically significant is also that most newspapers, which remained on the market were newspapers, albeit nominally “independent”, in reality linked to the elites, business interests or conservative values. Exceptions occur, but the trend is quite clear: it is the more articulated left-wing, radical-liberal or socialist press that has disappeared. The deregulation period has not broken a monopolistic development.

2 The end of public broadcasting monopolies in Europe.

This process accelerated, from the period when satellite television and cable distribution became commonplace in the beginning of the 1980s. Though private operators were admitted in the public service broadcasting systems in a few countries, the big transition started with the appearance of satellite trans-frontier television, and the parallel construction of cable distribution networks of these and other channels. Previous trans-frontier broadcasting in radio (short and medium wave frequencies) never challenged national public monopolies. The result of this development was the mushrooming of new channels using the new distribution techniques.

This de-monopolisation was a period of regulation; competition conditions of the new operators had to be fixed. In the United States the weakening of the public broadcasting sector and a continued extension of the dominance of commercial broadcasting was the major trend, although cable-distribution also permitted the entry of some smaller operators, locally, normally in conjunction with larger networks.

It is useful to consider those two scenarios together – they are mostly perceived as opposite movements, one for the daily press, another for broadcasting.

---

213 For a recent, lucid, discussion of these issues see Jürgen Habermas’ speech (Habermas 2006) on receiving the Austrian Kresky prize.
214 Lippman
The appearance of a radically new, though still cable-based, form or rather space of distribution, the Internet, is to some extent blurring the picture, though as yet not radically, looking from the point of view of marketisation. Internet might still be regarded as a rather wild-life media sphere, rather than a regular market, though there are clearly market zones also inside it and between this space and other spaces.

**Media concentration, deregulation, regulation…**

The political dimension of cultural production, labelled here “mediatisation” is a complex phenomenon. While “deregulation” was the word of the day for broadcasting since around 1980 in Europe – the US media policy structure moving towards a next to complete withdrawal of public broadcasting, from its initially rather strong position, since the 1930s – the issue of media concentration was recurrent in political debates in many countries, at least from the 1960s.

This study will look into that complex in some detail in later chapters, but some notes belong to also this initial survey, in order to focus on the political dimension of social change and its “mediatisation”.

In the Council of Europe, entrusted after WW II with the supervision of human rights, and hence also freedom of information and press, in European democratic countries, complaints over the concentration processes were numerous and debates over the remedies to adopt were sometimes heated, but no binding agreement over common measures was reached, though some countries decided to introduce some national measures, or revive measures existing earlier. France introduced restrictions in connection with the complete reshaping of the media structure after the war, and adopted 1986 a law, restricting the share of ownership for a single operator in the press to 30%. Finland, Norway and Sweden introduced around 1970 economic support for newspapers in a weak market position, with some degree of efficiency, in slowing down the process of concentration. Most other countries – along with them Denmark despite its rather strong Social Democratic party and a tradition of rather interventionist policies in many areas - accepted in concrete political life market mechanisms for the newspaper market, killing most daily newspapers in Europe in a few decades. Interventions in the advertising structures, conducive to this development, were vigorously combated by the industry and rarely attempted by governments. Public intervention in the press structure was, understandably, in view of the horrors of Fascist, Nazi and Communist propaganda machineries, rejected, as a whole, irrespectively of its character. Thus also measures targeting merely the business structure were rejected - as infringing upon the freedom of the press as much as censorship. The remaining, mostly “independent”, viz. liberal or rightwing, dailies, increased their circulation, which left the total volume of daily press, as a whole, intact. The media industry owners, general business interests (advertisers etc.), as well as the journalistic profession were thus by and large untouched by concentration, since the surviving newspapers continued to employ, (even growing numbers of) journalists, kept more or less silent. New work opportunities were also offered by the expanding television. In sum, political diversity of the titles of the daily press, as well as diversity of independent press companies, had by and large been eliminated by market forces – and an indirect policy of acceptance - by around 1985, in most European countries.

Public opinion became, in the last phase of the agony of the pluralism of titles of the daily press in Europe, rather worried. This happened when the expansion of some “media tycoons” became a public phenomenon in the 1980s – names as Murdoch, Maxwell, Berlusconi, on the international level and Hersant, Lagardère, Dassault, Bertelsmann, Springer, Kirch, Schibsted, Erkkö and Bonnier, to mention a few on a more national level, became known in wide circles.

Both the Council of Europe and the European Union finally took initiatives in media policy, adopting legal instruments for trans-frontier television and also studying the question of media concentration. The European Commission issued a Green Paper in 1992 suggesting some

---

215 McChesney
measures for restriction of ownership in the media sector. After a very long period the entire project was however cancelled – primarily due to the efforts of lobby groups, such as the European Publishers’ Council (chaired, and in reality dominated, by Rupert Murdoch). The Council of Europe did arrive in adopting some recommendations, entrusting to the good will of a member state to adopt measures or not. So actually a catalogue of possible interventions exists, but no obliging legislation.

Obviously the growing influence and power of some of the media tycoons – Berlusconi himself a long time Prime Minister, Murdoch a close ally of the British “New Labour” leader Tony Blair, as well as the close relationships between the Bertelsmann group and the German Social Democrats - has not reduced the impact of the phenomenon. The presidency election campaign in France in 2007 was a recent good example of the centrality of the media structure: the elected right-wing candidate Nicolas Sarkozy systematically for decades constructed his position on a network of friends and connections among the dominant media owners in France: Dassault, Lagardère, Rothschild, Bouygues etc. thus succeeding in keeping his name present in the media for years before the election in 2007.216

The process of mediatisation certainly did reduce the energy of the political institutions. While formally some of the regulations on concentration of ownership still exist in most of the countries where they had been introduced, the reality is that nothing has happened, or even less: the regulations have not only shown their irrelevance for reducing the movements of concentration, on the contrary, with a few exceptions, they have rather demonstrated their function as instruments of adaptation to a prevailing system of power in dominant media groups and politicians. Thus they have demonstrated the rhetoric character of these systems of legislation – the Italian system is perhaps the most perfect parody of a system of legislation, assisting the present richest man of the country, dominant in the media, to reach the highest position of the country. Instead of being a “regulation” it functioned as a system of promotion of power. The changes in the British regulations of media ownership introduced in from 2001 do not differ much in this respect – they did, in a similar manner, serve the interests of the dominant media owner of the country. It is impossible not to have the impression that these changes were directly a thanks for the services offered by Mr Murdoch to Mr Blair in two subsequent general elections.

It is also not very credible, for any external observer, to label this variety of mediatisation anything else but corruption, although, except in Berlusconi’s case, corruption did not directly bring economic advantages, but rather served political personal interests.

It is also impossible to avoid the conviction that the aggressive promotion from Mr Murdoch’s media empire, in the US and in the UK, of the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 did not have any influence on the position of the British political leadership. This example of mediatisation of politics is not unique, but it may be taken as a show-case.

Of course this brings in grave implications of the discussion on media concentration – in the last case the issue is a question of life or rather death of perhaps hundreds of thousands of victims of the Iraq war (figures differ drastically), in the other case of grasp of political power by a man who would might have had to serve some time in jail for his manipulations of the justice in his own economic interests.

In the case of one other major Western country, France, where the press is reduced and monopolized to an important degree, the manipulations of several, if not all, of its political leaders in regards to its interests in Africa for decades has led to a remarkable silence - broken by the satirical “Le Canard enchaîné” – in reality a support for the next to consistent support of a number of horrendous gangster regimes in France’s old colonial empire, including personal friendship relations between the previous French president (also a candidate for jail, for corruption, had he not been a president) and some of the cruel and corrupt dictators, the deceased Eyadema in Togo (succeeded by his son) is one of the rather shocking examples, that obviously did not inspire to any greater media debate ...

216 Cf article in Le Monde Diplomatique September 2006.
The obvious, and scandalous, support of the dominant US media for a war started under false pretexts and demonstrable lies by a president whose legitimacy, when first appointed, was at least highly doubtful, is another example of the failing role of the media, at least from a traditional point of view. The history and structure of this “manufacturing of consent” operation has to some extent already been written before the events themselves, by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman. The fact that the son of the retired US Secretary of State was the chairman of the central US government agency for the media, the Federal Communications Commission, is of course also a demonstration of the arrogance of power – serving the interests of the groups backing the present US regime. The war crimes and failure of the occupants to create peace and stability, let alone democracy (despite the success of the performed elections), in the occupied country (itself a state created by the British imperialists at the break-down of the Ottoman empire…) do create some uproar in some media – but the obvious military defeat of the Saddam regime was as good an electoral campaign asset for Mr Bush as was the war Ms Thatcher launched against Argentina over the Falkland/Malvinas islands. Be sure to start a war against a weak adversary and you will win the next election...

One might ask whether in fact these examples of mediatization of the political dimension in terms of corruptive relations between media and the political power are not natural outcomes of the closing down of the discussion on media power – the natural, liberal, answer is of course “yes” – if there is no scrutiny of power, corruption is the automatic consequence. There seems to be no particular difference between democratic or elected leaders and others.

It may be a over-pessimistic scenario, but the closing down of the debate over media power, or power over cultural production, seems to announce a serious structural crisis in the inherited systems of government of the democratic states. One basic function is more or less absent, or reduced to a level where only a small dissident minority has access to alternative information on a couple of crucial political processes. In the case of the breakdown of Communist dictatorships in most of the East and Central European states, the role of information and of media leakage, breaking the bulwark of silence of these regimes, was crucial – indeed sometimes underestimated in favour of external pressures and economic internal problems. In the case of Western public opinion of today, the media monopolisation process might have a reverse effect: stopping the bloodstream of criticism and scrutiny, leading to an infarctus of democratic rule.

Democracy is not a system secured against all risks: never forget that Hitler was elected and appointed under democratic procedures – and that his grasp of absolute power by way of proclaiming a state of emergency nearly immediately after his legal appointment just showed his shrewdness in exploiting the exceptional clauses contained in a constitution based on democratic sovereignty. The notion of sovereignty has come back into the philosophico-political debate by the interventions of Giorgio Agamben, recalling earlier works of, above all, Carl Schmitt.

The more intricate details of the analysis of concentration of power in the media field will be treated later, the crucial position of the structural development in the media sector for the political processes of change is – again – the show-case of the central role of cultural production in contemporary social change.

**Justice and legal norms**

Singling out legal changes in the political dimension of change affected by cultural production amounts to a description of much of the same processes as those touched upon already, since legal systems are intertwined with other cultural production spheres, sometimes following rather slowly, sometimes adapting rather quickly when sufficient pressure is put onto it. The “deregulation-re-regulation” discourse of the media sector encompasses this role of the legal-normative ingredient. Some “parodic” aspects of legalisation of media concentration have been mentioned, other details in the development might be featured, for example the kind of complex legal...

---

217 Parody is the way of using components known to the audience to produce an unexpected effect – the genre was not always understood as just something for jesters – in music of the Renaissance it was a regular and respected kind of composition.
battle waged between the public broadcasters united in the European Broadcasting Union, the European Commission, often dogmatically sticking to principles of competition and restricting public interventions, or even public service functions, as a whole, as well as national interests of a rather mixed nature. The legal battlefield includes the defenders of the public broadcasting systems both for rather “idealistic” reasons, and for reasons of quality and pluralism in the supply. Socialists and Conservatives could sometimes unite – against Liberals. Artistic innovation, productions of classical fine arts and critical debates have notorious problems in coming to the fore in commercial broadcasting systems – quite differently so from the traditional free-enterprise printed press (at least historically).

Legal norms construction has still to integrate the need of public authorities to have access to publicly controlled (albeit at “arms length”) media, although mostly partly financed on a commercial basis. Tradition vary in different countries, but despite solemn proclamations of independence in every inch of the programme production, it would be naive not to take into consideration the mediatized links between establishments in cultural production, influencing, quite beyond the formal legal framework, the power of appointing executives in public companies, involving personal relationships behind such appointments, and – consequently – personal loyalties.

French practice means, for example, that, blatantly contrary to principles of “arms length” management regulation of public media, mostly a change of government also entails a change of chief executives in the public media system. In the European Union, so far, the legal exceptional position of public broadcasting has been upheld in the EU treaties since its establishment in the Amsterdam protocol annexed to the Treaty. The Council of Europe has, since its foundation, laid down that the principle of public media does not infringe upon the freedom of expression.

The second most important aspect of legal implications of the mediatized political sphere of change has already been mentioned – that is, copyright and authors’ right. This legal zone touches all fields of change: geographical, technological and political aspects. The pure political aspects often pass unnoticed – due to the technically and conceptually intricate details of copyright law. The sometimes hair-splitting distinctions of this legislation do not promote an informed public discussion. The earlier lack of public attention has however seemingly ended, after the fierce combats around downloading music and video files to personal computers – suddenly every teenager in the affluent world is conscious of the complications and conflicts of copyright, mostly being in declared opposition to the formal legal dispositions. The army of lawyers representing interests of authors (artists, performers, writers), through their collecting societies, but mostly interests of large cultural industry business organisations, which in many cases also influence the collecting societies are mostly successful on the official level. But an interesting kind of resistance towards a rigid application of copyright motivated punishments also seems to pervade some of the public judiciary system, aware of the huge masses of adolescents who would otherwise be sentenced.

The divergence between American/English copyright traditions and Continental European authors’ right traditions have been noted, and the convergence between those systems favouring the copyright tradition. This essentially implies an increased corporate control over legally protected cultural products. Since companies engaged in the rights trade are in many cases parts of big media conglomerates, ownership concentration also becomes crucial in this trade – where legal construction of norms should, supposedly, balance interests of authors, performers, distribution and production firms, and the general public.

As a whole this situation is a good demonstration of Bourdieu’s seemingly offensive (save for the purely anthropological viewpoint) inclusion of legal systems, both written norms and practice, in cultural production.
Scholarly production
The dimension of political change, from the point of view of scientific research production – regarded as one of the fields of cultural production – appears less obvious to recognize as one characterized by mediatization than the other fields, though this is precisely the gist of Bourdieu’s attack in “On Television”. Is it really typical for our age that the media have, in some political sense, grasped the power over scholarly research? The evidence seems to be less obvious than in the other fields, prima facie.

One factor worth looking at from the point of view of the power over academic scholarly work in Europe is the change of methods of financing research, another one is the size of resources available. One would, firstly, taking other spheres of cultural production as examples, expect a growth, in absolute terms and proportionally to other social areas, of this field. Secondly, the influence of the media over research policy should be assessed.

In absolute terms, national and international research programme funds have grown appreciably, though it is not clear that this is the case also in proportion to total economic growth. Actually the proportion seems to be rather stable. In Europe one factor to be noted is the role which programmes under the auspices of the European Union have assumed in many disciplines. Since the immense complications of the bureaucratic process of the European Union nearly require specialist competence already at the stage of application for funds, arriving at a successful end of this process consumes significant administrative resources at a national level. The major part of the EU funds are ear-marked for natural science and technology, though also some important programmes have been launched in social sciences and cultural research. Thus the effects of these large programmes is, as in the cultural production sector as a whole, a centralisation and concentration of resources to a “lucky few”. Probably these lucky few are also mostly, though studies will have to confirm this, circles and institutions enjoying the reputation of “excellence” institutions – thus, just as in the other cultural production spheres, building up strong positions, in the “social capital market”, to use one of Bourdieu’s other notions. The big prizes – Nobel prizes first of all - are, naturally, strong markers of this social capital possession. The public nature of most research funds does not, it seems, change capital market structure – as was already well described in Bourdieu’s study of the “academic man”218.

Policies of “deregulation” of the research structure has, somewhat paradoxically, thus meant that research funding has been centralized - transferred from the academic institutions themselves - to large foundations, research councils or similar external funding institutions, which steer resources primarily to “centres of excellence” with a strong cultural, and in some cases immense economic219, capital. Traditionally, technological and medical (nb. pharmaceutical) research has been funded by external private sources to a much larger degree than other research areas – and the links to business life are accordingly much stronger. This trend has been strengthened – sometimes even at the frontier zone of legality. Still the basic infrastructure of education, institutions etc. is publicly funded. This situation illustrates problems described above, under the heading of “the Piper’s principle”220.

218 Homo academicus
219 The assets of, for example, Harvard University exceed by far many large corporations, and even national states.
220 News media in Sweden reported (2/3 2005) about a case where the executive directors and Rector of the most prestigious Swedish research institute in medicine (with the Nobel prize committee in medicine under its auspices) have launched a trust fund in their own names to receive contributions from private – pharmaceutical industry-related – interests for research at the Institute. Since transparency regulation requires any research institute to ask for Government permission before instituting trust funds the executive leadership chose this way, thus derogating regulations, in reality. One of the founders of the trust fund – the former Rector of the institute, and present councillor to the national government on research, also member of about 20 different business company executive boards, offered as his principal argument what he qualified as a moral one: if our research institutions do not have the same conditions as institutions in the United States of America we cannot simply compete on the world arena. Globalisation has thus, in the opinion of this leading figure of Swedish research establishment, been transformed into a moral requirement – even at the expense of some rather controversial manoeuvres, securing more than 1 million $ a year for the institute’s research. The moral quality rests, probably, upon an interpretation of a kind of “justice” between research institutions in the world as a whole: if one institution does not enjoy the privileges and conditions of another institute in another
External funding constitutes, in theory at least, a pressure for scientific research to integrate better in the social environment, although the principle of “peer review” should guarantee high scholarly standards as well. One factor supposed to promote social integration was the introduction of more interdisciplinary, problem-oriented rather than intra-scientifically motivated, research in the 1970s. These programmes normally also included public representation in managing bodies and were supposed to reflect social needs. The impetus of interdisciplinary trends seems however to have gone somewhat down though still a lot of large research programmes presuppose different disciplinary approaches.

Though media debates and political trends influence research in these indirect manners it is difficult to perceive any radically new trends or breaks. The research establishment is less subject to swings, simply because of its character of transmission of a series of canons of results, theories and methods and the high demand for beginners to socialise into these traditions. And the “principle of communism” of scientific findings and ideas is another factor which distinguishes (!) the scientific field from other cultural production fields: the capital produced in this sphere does not, as such, provide the source of living for the people employed there, they are not, for example, dependent on the protection of immaterial law. Scientific research has, differently from the major part of the other cultural production fields, still a rather strong nucleus of people working on long-term contracts or on academic tenure. These factors should be expected to counterbalance the effects of the “Piper’s principle.”

However, the expansion of the higher educational systems and the gradual transfer of research resources from faculty professorships or long-term contracts in research institutes to projects funded on application by large research finance institutions, has also in many cases meant that teaching and research staff are hired on a project basis. Tenures become a distant dream for a growing number of workers in the academic world.

This restructuration may lead to a renewed “politicization” of research – stronger than the above-mentioned trend of social integration - in the following way:

Since the State or the public sector remains the most important funder of non-applied research, the requirement may be strong to set up research objectives and employ discourse fitting into in a more or less “fashionable” framework. This adaptation could be healthy and break up an esoteric academic environment, but it could also foster an inclination to formulate and design programmes in too much of a “salesman” fashion. This might involve a risk that a research grant awarded under a certain heading might be used for a different research purpose, to the detriment of intellectual honesty.

In this process the media play a role – but it seems that this role is less pervading than the general political battlefield. With some exceptions, research policy, along with cultural policy, in the narrow sense of arts and cultural heritage policies, is seldom at the centre of political debates. The kind of media dominance over research cited by Bourdieu seems also to be a rather rare phenomenon, actually mostly occurring in connection with some scandal.

**Politics of cultural production**

So far some examples of the political dimension of change, characterized by “mediatization” have been taken from diverse spheres of cultural production, in the wider sense of the term. It has
been argued that cultural production may be analyzed from three different aspects or assessed along three dimensions – geographical, technological and political - all demonstrating that cultural, rather than material, production determines social development at present. These dimensions may be labelled external dimensions.

However, cultural production is also determined by political factors in a more internal sense, more specific to the diverse spheres of production. As indicated from the outset of the present study, it was inspired by conditions pertaining primarily to the mass media, leading over to other fields of cultural production. In the following, some more detailed observations on the political situation of media and of cultural policies in a more narrow sense, will be suggested.

The environment of media policy – analytic complications

It has been argued, on a general level, that the “politics of culture”, including but not only restricting itself to cultural policy and media policy, in a number of respects would benefit by being regarded from the position of an imagined external observer, for example an anthropologist from Africa or Asia, who submits Western cultural production politics to analysis. Such a perspective might – I could imagine – lead to the effect of integrating a number of points of view, research perspectives, and more ideological or philosophical approaches into a whole structure, system or field (select your term…). One consequence of such an approach might be that professional borders used to establish a particular research perspective or discipline – for example “journalism” and “journalistic practice” - appear rather far-fetched, not because it is not a valid field of research but because it locks up a perspective to a particular profession. Obviously research into the practice of theatre acting or the aesthetics of drama is quite as legitimate as any other kind of research. But a “regard from outside” might be a useful approach to observe different categories of people acting within the media, whether professional journalists, editors, owners, secretaries, advertising agents, invited columnists. Also “amateurs”, beside professionals, should be given their rightful place in the study. In media production professionalisation is a notion marking the recent change, which means that less and less material is produced by people without formal training for their job.

An approach to integrate media policy in a broader external-observer-perspective is likely to take account of also other forms of expression, such as artistic, legal, scientific or, for that matter also religious (an aspect lacking in this study). One aspect, unavoidable in media policy studies is that, in government administrations, this policy includes both cultural policy aspects and the constitutional arena, that is, where the fundaments of democratic (or undemocratic) rule are formalized. Most democratic (and undemocratic) constitutions contain clauses of the freedom (or restrictions) of the media, their obligations etc. Looking at matters from this angle the relations between media, the legal system and the public space as such – also containing other modes of communication and fields of cultural production – seem rather well sewn together. Mostly this is however taken as an argument to exclude the “central” field of media regulation from the more “peripheral” field of cultural policy, instead of situating the politics of cultural production at the centre of the political interest.

This is not only a terminological or conceptual issue – the separation of the media from other forms of cultural production, in the legal/constitutional system determines the position of these other forms in the political arena, that is, at the periphery.

Media policy, cultural production and competition

Media policy is linked not only to cultural policy in the narrow sense, or the politics of culture, in a broader conception. It is in a particular way also linked to one aspect of economic policy (the politics of economy?) which, as it were, turns out to be a kind of general policy for the Reign of Mind – not only the ordinary transactions of all other kinds of goods and services. This field, competition policy, is situated at the centre of media policy. The central concern of competition pol-
icly is to secure freedom of choice for the consumer or user of goods and services in society. The terms and senses tied to this concern are *logic* – pluralism, diversity, variety, plurality, manifold etc., just to choose some of the English terms. I will come back to this semantic-political havoc later.

Economic policies of market systems are basically tied to to the idea that if the consumer or user does not have a choice, power resides with the producer or salesman. Only the plurality of producers and distributors could secure genuine competition. Since a market is about many choices and losing or winning the assent of buyers, competition is a kind of *limes* concept: whenever one sole product or trade-mark, a producer or a distributor, has “won” competition, competition is dead. Theoretically, competition is, at its best, a phenomenon which eliminates itself...

In the Reign of Mind, quite regardless of the economic values given to diverse products, another kind of competition is waged; there is a plurality of views, discourses, ways to see, perspectives, opinions etc., that are not directly linked to the concrete sales or purchases on a market. The very idea of democracy and free elections rests upon this presupposition. On a more scholarly level analyses of the history of discourses (Foucault), or of mentalities (Elias) etc. try to empirically grasp and describe what happens in this kind of competition – it is not an easy task and results are often unstable and contested. Nevertheless understanding of society today or historically is just impossible if generalizations of this type are not permitted as legitimate. School-book generalities like “the Middle Ages in Western Europe were dominated by the Christian Church” or “the era of Enlightenment implied an increased role for critical reason” or “the second half of the 19th century was a century of positivism, break-through of evolutionism and liberal ideologies” could not be dismissed as entirely arbitrary, though constant discussions and revaluations are confusing our understanding.

Actually, our fictional Asian anthropologist, or historian, expert on the tiny Western part of their continent, named “Europe”, would have no difficulty in using such generalisations in giving lectures to her or his students. Metaphorically, in the telephoto-lens perception of social structures become more concentrated, but not necessarily less true, than, for example, E=mc². Exactness is something relative to the code of expression used – and mathematics uses codes for certain domains and purposes – purposes that are not meaningful in historical or social science.

On a political daily arena, matters are less difficult to sort out: if you have a choice between several political parties in a free election, competition is there, between general approaches and ideologies. Trademarks are used, in the form of party names, political camps etc. Similarly, the public space allows also between elections for distinct and opposing viewpoints and perspectives or ideologies. Naming is of course an action (collective one) where the “tyranny of presence” – to paraphrase Derrida – is generally recognised. The dead could not contest the choice of historians in giving a particular name to this or that epoch. The scholarly discipline of history gives the historian a power over the domain not present in natural science, in the sense that history only deals with traces of human activities, texts in a wide sense of the term. Texts always have to be interpreted, reconstructed events and structures or processes given names and put into a context. The power of one historian or a school of historians is, normally and frequently, contested by other historians, bringing in new traces, in the form of written texts not encountered, images or archaeological remains, or proposing new perspectives of explanation or narratives.

A problematic situation arises in the interface between the two zones of production, which have been customarily distinguished, that is, “material” and “cultural” production. When the “material” competition of goods, companies, operators, breaks down, or ends by the sheer success of one of the partners in competition, a discussion whether the “cultural” or immaterial competition could survive, might be justified. And if so, to what degree is the cultural competition dependent on some kind of “isomorphic” material competition structure. In other, more

---

221 A complicated term to use after the different shades given to the term by Marx and by different Marxist schools of thought, cf. Gramsci, Althusser and others.
concrete, terms: does the battle or competition between ideas depend (and how much?) on the competition between business or production structure on the material level, such as pluralism of independent business companies, public/civil society operators etc.?

Competition is usually gauged in terms of market shares of individual operators or groups – the aim of competition policy is to safeguard and promote “sound” competition, that is, with several participants. The “market share” of ideas, cultural expressions etc. present or adhered to in a population is however not equally easy to grasp. For example: a very “exclusive” or innovative idea, having very few adherents, that is a low “market share”, might by its very existence in the public space be quite an important factor to other participants in the debate, simply by its novelty, originality, or controversy. This is the hallmark of creativity.

Actually, to complicate the measuring of “ideal market shares”, the space of attention might be singled out as a, mostly transitional, parameter for the space of market shares in the “ideal sense”. To use a metaphor: The space of attention might be compared to a plastic bag filled with water – as long as it is completely tight there is no problem, but if you just make a hole with a pin-needle, things happen quickly. Scandals are good examples of this pine-needle effects; a “Toblerone” bar bought on an official credit card eliminated the candidature for being Prime Minister in Sweden, diamonds meant the fall of a French President etc.

Even if some ideas are commonplace, they might just be in the “back of the minds” of people, as it were “forming” the shape of the public space, and thus really be organised as a kind of market. But when new ideas appear, the structure of commonplace ideas and ways of thinking (acting) might overturn the entire structure in a moment: this is the gist of the notion of innovation.

Using the commercial notion of market shares (and indeed, the exchange of ideas has many similarities to commerium) for various aspects of the “space of ideas”, whether the “background structure (the structure of the “unsaid” in Foucault’s terms), or the more focussed “attention structure”, one has to observe that the involvement of notions of cultural and social capital excludes identification of the spaces (or fields, if you prefer the two-dimensional metaphor) of

1) the production/consumption market of cultural products (material),
2) the market of ideal, cultural and social capital
3) the market of attention.

Political battles are fought in all these three spaces, arenas or fields: the material interface of cultural production (media companies, cultural institutions and facilities), the space of “background ideas” or the “unsaid”, the discourse of presuppositions, and the space of attention. Trying to establish some kind of correspondence between these spaces might be regarded as a meticulous task for a social and cultural “topology” - a task bravely launched by Marx and Engels with their thesis on base and superstructure dependence, and continued by, among others, Bourdieu, but it is a task which has to use rather more complex descriptive apparatuses and theoretical progress made since then.

Legal norms, immaterial property and gift societies

The production of legal norms has been included in the sphere of cultural production throughout this presentation. Two levels of legal production should be distinguished. One is the normal reference of expressions, that is, to other things than expressions. Most laws, accordingly, neither deal with laws, nor with other forms of cultural production. They deal with economy, crimes, schools, etc.

---

222 The “torus” (looking like a old-fashioned inner tyre of a car) as a typical figure in topology could be “turned inside and out”, twisted etc. but still some correspondence, or one-to-one relationship, “isomorphy” might be traced
But some do, some of the legal sphere is more internal, that is concretely dealing with cultural production than other spheres. The politics of justice, viewed from the point of view of the inclusion of the legal sphere in the sphere of cultural production, might be characterised by some themes rather close to that already discussed under the heading of “deregulation”.

Privatisation might actually be taken as a generic term for most of the legal transformations characterising cultural as well as material production in recent political strategies. Private means taken away from the power and structure of the public sphere – to “deprive” still exists as an English term, with a rather negative sounding.

After a period of increasing public interventions for the support of artistic production, and the national cultural heritage during the 1960s-70s, the end of the cold war, though followed by an epoch of surging regional conflicts and superpower interventions, was accompanied by an opening up of markets for trade, freer international financial flows etc., in other terms “liberalisation”.

Public monopolies in services like telecommunications, transports, and broadcasting as well as some other societal sectors, were opened up on the European level actively promoted by the European Commission, in its efforts to create a Single Inner European Market – basically on the bases of liberal economic principles.

This meant a transfer of some important spheres of production to the private sector. In the cultural field, the opening up of broadcasting to private operators everywhere in Europe is the most clear-cut example. Also a general reduction of public subventions to traditional art institutions was urged, though – as indicated by the above-mentioned Unesco survey – the trend seems to have been a standstill rather than following general trends of shrinking the public share of the economy as such. …

On the formal legal level new regulation had to replace dismantled monopolies, rather than introducing a “liberalisation” or anarchy for the scene of legal cultural production. The privatisation of public spheres has a counterpart in the failure of regulators and private business to cope with some of the technological advances rapidly following in the wake of digitisation. The prime example is of course the music industry and the MP3 and other systems of decoding music recordings downloadable over the Web – the video industry is in a similar wave of privatisation or anarchic copying of protected works. One word for this phenomenon is of course “liberty”, viz. a liberty for consumer to find and share products that are normally paid for, for each copy, but which are now available to everyone, equipped with sufficient computer capacity to download. A very critical position has recently been taken on the subject of the role of immaterial property by former World Bank economist and Nobel Economy prize winner Joseph Stiglitz.

Since the capacity to circumvent protection devices seems to be at least as big as the capacity to construct new ones, the individual consumers have instruments to overrun the rightsholders. This is of course an alarming situation for the media and other immaterial rights holders companies, and – though this is much less clear – perhaps also to the creators as individual authors. In many of these battles well-organised business interests join forces with public authorities. New legislation on “piracy” is regularly being launched, but since the technology is simple enough for large segments of users, and legal machineries do not cope with prosecuting what amounts to perhaps a majority of the young generation, a situation of massive disobedience of formal regulation is prevalent in what used to be relatively legally ordered contexts. Moral arguments advanced by business companies and collecting societies representing creators and authors do not generally seem to convince. Solutions involving subscription services for licensed material might ultimately turn up to be a compromise, reducing per copy payment, but still acknowledging the right of remuneration.

Philosophically speaking, “communism” of the research community for creative results may have, as much as the principles based on immaterial property, to speak in its favour. The relatively low number of successful creators and performers who make money from recordings

223 Quoted in, for example, the French daily Libération Sept 13, 2006. Cf also Stiglitz 2007.
or copying levies in the music sector probably do not impress the public moral consciousness. The vast majority of creators and performers anyhow have to take recourse to other income sources. Traditional right-holders, such as writers, have a more stable position than more recent categories of copyright holders, although, also there, strong business organisations like publishing houses, today often incorporated in wider media conglomerates, reap the main profits of the trade. Though a few successful writers in major language spheres may earn quite a lot of money from royalties, also the vast majority of writers of all genres and in all countries remain dependent on other sources of income.

This situation of good-bye to the old legal order of immaterial property – a case of extreme liberty, libertarianism, legal anarchy or whatever expression might be preferred, might be regarded as a kind of either limit, or ideal, market situation: competition is at its maximum when nobody controls the supply. It might also be compared to a new sort of gift or potlatch economy, an economy based on gifts, not sales. The classical work by the French sociologist and anthropologist Marcel Mauss from 1925 on the gift society seems to have become a master work for an entire new movement – also an illustration of how production of legal norms in modern societies, in an anthropological perspective, faces “competition” from other cultural production processes, and from technological development. A rapid look in Google (April 23, 2008 at 18.08 GMT+1) gave 365 000 responses and several special sites under the heading of gift economy.

At present, mostly young consumers in the affluent world benefit from the technology available, whereas in past times the amount of investment required represented insurmountable obstacles to market entry for small players, both consumers and sellers. Measures to stop this kind of anarchy are both criminal legislation, such as sharpening of copyright law and “anti-piracy compensation measures”, for example levies on empty video and audio cassettes, CDs and DVDs transferred to companies, collecting societies and authors. This collectivisation of income is used in some degree for common purposes by collecting societies, and might be regarded as one of the many compromises which immaterial property requires for market economies. Such measures, however, do not seem work if they do not intervene much more heavily in the market of computer hard- and software. Measures of this kind might be compared to collective transport policies. In situations where costs for common transports are unacceptably high for significant parts of the population, pressures, such as civil disobedience in the form of refusal to pay metro fares etc. become difficult to handle for the legal norms production system. Communication and transport of persons and goods have a lot in common...

Actually still much remains to demonstrate that right holders and business companies really suffered losses as results of new copying devices. The opposite is also claimed to be the case: the more copies of a recording that were (are) made, the better sales become, also in the regular market....

The interests behind reinforcing copyright legislation are mixed, and thus do not all respond to the moral intuitions of the general public. One reason is that rich business conglomerates may not inspire the same sentiments of solidarity as rather poor cultural workers.

Scientific research

In public policy contexts, science and technology often go together. Some prefer the label Research and Development policies, some Science and Technology policy for one integrated field of policies. The integration of these two fields of social or political life is not unproblematic from the point of view applied in this study for two reasons, at least.

One is that scholarly research is characterised by the “principle of communism of ideas” – and thus entirely different in its power relations from market-oriented technological knowledge structures – based on the ideas of patents, immaterial property and restricted access, in reality a

---

224 Cf. Alf Rehn, Johan Söderberg.

temporary (sometimes rather long!) monopoly of ideas and research results. It has been noted already that the notions of market economy and free competition take on a paradoxical application because of this monopolistic structure.

The other may be that, at least in some versions of materialist traditions, while science is rather classified together with the “superstructure” of a social context, technology belongs to the more “basic” (or, again somewhat paradoxically, “applied”) level. Indeed production technology is precisely that mode of description which might be the criterion for subdivision of historical epochs in “feudal”, “industrial” etc. societies. Thus machines like the steam engines form the basis for industrial production, just as the introduction of medieval arms technology was seen as the basis for feudal societies.

This might be considered a struggle about the priority of the egg or the hen and accordingly illustrates the difficulty in choosing criteria for social categorizations of this general nature. Still the choice between “mind first” or “material production first” determines much of the mode of description of social structures, including structures of influence and power.

Since, however, the general thesis in this study is an “idealist” one, the term “idealist” being mainly used to denote the primacy of cultural production, the, rather awkward, attempt to draw sharp lines between different fields of human production does not need to bother us: technological changes have been classified as a dimension for gauging the advance of production in the fields classified as cultural.

A phenomenon worth some discussion in the field of scholarly research is the gradually growing role of some principles of industrial market-driven production. One of these is the introduction of planned large-scale research programmes, both nationally and internationally. This is, prima facie, not a phenomenon which, directly, is associated to market-economy mechanisms – rather the contrary, it is mostly a field where national or other public (EU) levels intervene in industrial or industrially related interactions, by tax-payer funding and planning of these programmes. On the other hand, government (and EU) interventions are explicitly based on arguments for increasing some level of competitiveness in general, obviously not the competitiveness of individual firms but national (or European). In this, indirect, sense there is a market inspiration behind these programmes. The exploitation of government funded research results are then at the disposal of firms – thus the principle of “communism” pervades this transfer of knowledge from science to technology. Market considerations is also often indirectly a factor behind the choice of research areas for these large-scale publicly funded programmes. It is characterized by a priority given to medical and natural sciences, applied science and to technological research. The social objectives, such as better health, higher productivity etc. attached to, and supposedly benefiting from these kinds of research rather than others are on a more general level than economic competition interests but are still tightly linked to those. Social science and humanities are mostly far behind in priorities. They remain for the major part tied to public institutional funding, in universities, by research councils and in some case private foundations. Complaints about the marginalisation and reduction of public funding for these kinds of research are legio among scholars of these disciplines.

In many public structures the reduction of research resources coming from ordinary institutional arrangements, such as time for research within academic tenures etc., is an on-going process, grudgingly accepted or contested by the academic community within the “softer” disciplines of cultural, social and humanities research. In some cases these disciplines manage to reserve funds for themselves, in research foundations etc. but mostly their position is difficult to hold in view of the more direct exploitation in economic terms which other fields of research seem to offer. One of the rescue exits for these research disciplines is – as demonstrated by the discourse in which this study is situated – the emergence of new social perspectives presented by the change of production structures, from material production to cultural production. In this perspective results by cultural disciplines might even be imagined to furnish new economically important industries, such as the media, design and “experience” industries, with material for
competitive projects. Whether this will result in a more general change of structural mechanisms and economic priorities depends on the stability of the new trends in research, and, ultimately the social acceptance of these trends. That the priorities set for the politics of scholarly research are not evidently the same as ours might be realized by adopting a historical and cultural perspective. Remember that the overall priority for research funding and structural set-up of European systematic search of knowledge was quite different from most present-day ideas. For example, theology and search for the eternal life was, obviously, the motivation behind the entire university structure set up in Europe in the Middle Ages. In other cultures religious considerations were also highly relevant for the choice of research areas. (India?)
POWER AND STRUCTURE IN CULTURAL PRODUCTION:

Pluralism – diversity – control – concentration

This inquiry has hitherto focussed on some general, philosophical, social, and cultural theory based considerations. The following chapters will be devoted to some more concrete political applications geared to the study of power structures in cultural production.

Pluralism: the politics of expectations

A few keywords dominate political discourse on cultural production. One couple of concepts is diversity and concentration. These terms are not only academic notions but also stand for a wide-ranging debate and controversy both for describing and what roads to follow when laying down legal and political frameworks for cultural production. One central concern in this discourse is to find a more precise use of these terms, often linked to a requirement for measure. Instead of saying that we have diversity (or do not) in cultural production, such as the arts or the media several attempts are proposed to suggest quantitative or statistical material to corroborate arguments for political action, or lack of action.

It is obvious, also, that the notions of diversity and concentration do not apply in the same way to different spheres of cultural production. For example, few would be prepared to argue that it is a value if legal production of one state or other administrative unit, as such, is characterised by diversity: one does not have, in the same state, a diversity of laws, competition is not a value. Instead legal frameworks are supposed to cater for diversity of other kinds, such as ethnic, linguistic, social, age, educational, cultural in narrow sense etc. For scholarly research also some kind of external common framework, for example “the search for truth”, is a value, rather than quite diverging aims. There the diversity and competition of methods, theories and financial sources may, instead, be hailed as important. For religion, philosophy, traditions and customs the case is, again, somewhat oscillating between a recognition of tolerance and the necessity of non-discrimination on one hand as values, and an understanding for values such as “integration” and unity, rather than diversity per se. The latter kind of discourse is obviously more important in times of pressure, unrest or conflict.

At least for two spheres of cultural production, both in political rhetoric and general public discourse, more than for other spheres, diversity is an essential value, viz. the arts and the media. There are a lot of distinctions to make in order to substantiate this claim but in general it might be held: if diversity is lacking in the media and in the arts, they do not fulfil their essential functions. They have a lot of other functions, but the essential role is missed.

Let me just try first to ascend a little on the road of “Vorverständnis” in the hermeneutical spiral of understanding the discourse of diversity. The way to do so will be some notes on the particular case history of European norm production.

A case of the legal battle over media diversity - The European tangles

Experts on media since long have gathered within the Council of Europe226 - an international body specifically entrusted with working out and implementing international law on human rights and democratic rule - to examine problems of diversity of the media, and to propose measures.

---

226 It is often necessary to remind of the distinction between those two bodies. The Council of Europe was created during the Cold War (in 1949) and encompasses all democratic states of Europe, today 47 Member States. Its headquarters in Strasbourg has as its immediate neighbour the European Parliament, which actually convened in the premises of the Council of Europe before its own sumptuous buildings were finished.
When the latest period of work started, around 1990, the European Parliament also forced\(^\text{227}\) the European Commission to start a parallel work within the European Union – just as in the case of legislating on European satellite television.

The problem appeared at the outset rather clear, and mainly concerning the expansion of some private media conglomerates to a degree where the diversity of democratic debate and information was put into jeopardy. Governments were in varying degrees genuinely worried, or just under pressure from public opinion, about the purchases and mergers of media companies. The international activities by persons or groups like Murdoch, Maxwell, Bertelsmann, Conrad Black, Berlusconi, were in focus just as regional or national conglomerates like Hersant and Lagardère in France, Bertelsmann, Springer and Kirch in Germany, or Bonnier, Schibsted, Sanoma, Egmont, Stenbeck in the northern part of Europe. The Communist dictatorships were just being replaced by democratic or protodemocratic Governments in Eastern and Central Europe, leaving an open field for the Western media groups. In the United States Ben Bagdikian’s *The Media Monopoly* and Chomsky-Herman’s *Manufacturing Consent* had drawn public attention to the rapid monopolisation process of North American media.

**The legalistic approach**

Policy makers in a number of forums rather quickly took the road of formal legal proposals to tackle the problems, by indicating levels or thresholds, above which the actors in the media market would not be allowed to pursue their expansion. Other methods, such as subvention systems already practised for the press in three Scandinavian countries, as well as, on a modest scale, in France, were regarded with great suspicion – in the vein of the general anti-interventionist and market-oriented political climate, which already dominated public political debates. Also, the very nature of the two European organisations working on the matter for ten years nearly automatically chose this approach – probably the root of the failure as such. Proposal to take common political action is concentrated to legal texts, viz. directives, regulations, conventions etc. This is, however, not at all the only, or the effective, way of acting. It may even be the opposite, as experience demonstrated. I will discuss this below and in later sections of this study.

Thresholds for interventions in cases of media concentration were expected to be founded on “hard facts”, for example statistical figures which, ideally, might be the basis both for international action and for political non-selective intervention by national authorities. This approach also governs the latest EU project, concentrating on finding some “objective” indicators for media concentration.

Rather quickly in the process embarked upon around 1990, a numerical level was also, as it were, offering itself: one third of the market seemed to be a reasonable threshold beyond which a private media operator should not be permitted to expand.

This level was living its life throughout the legal work of the European Union, where the draft proposals for a directive from the Commission, or at least from the offices of the then Commissioners Monti and Bangemann, retained that level both for the sectors of newspapers, radio and television separately, as well as for an amalgamated ‘media sector’.

Also this level is indicated in the only, quasi-legal, document, Recommendation 99:1, which the Council of Europe finally adopted in 1999, as the only, very modest, outcome of a long and cumbersome path of legislative efforts in both organisations.

Now, obviously this threshold requires to be assessed in some way or other, by some constant and reliable method. And, almost immediately, this became a major problem. The Commission entrusted the European Institute for the Media in Germany\(^\text{228}\) to suggest definitions of how these shares should be measured. For newspapers there are rather reliable figures of

---

\(^{227}\) Who remembers nowadays Klaus Schinzel, the German Social Democrat who signed the motions in the European Parliament which ultimately set the Commission on the track?

\(^{228}\) [http://www.eim.de/](http://www.eim.de/), Düsseldorf.
shares of circulation and/or readership – a ground for advertising pricing. Assessments of audience shares were being used in the commercial broadcasting sector in order to allow advertisers to negotiate prices and costs for their marketing. But considerable difficulties arise in taking into official legislation references to commercial measurements and in identifying exactly groups, companies or other actors, targeted by regulation. The European Commission, which also actively participated in the expert committees of the Council of Europe in its “Green Paper” of 1992, gave much attention to a definition of who should be considered, in the legal meaning of a Community directive, to be the “controller” of a company, a broadcasting channel, a newspaper etc. Already at a preliminary stage the ordinary concept of owner, such as a shareholder, did not serve the purpose of pointing out the real actors in the media market. This was before the appearance of the Internet, of blogs etc….

Nationally, diverse thresholds were used and proposed: the most detailed legal system was the Italian ‘Mammi’ law229, adopted in 1990, where 25 % was a threshold for television holdings. Originally intended to be a kind of law primarily aimed at restricting Berlusconi’s growing media empire, it turned out to be a kind of general condoning of Berlusconi’s holdings. The German television regulation was endowed with a set of fixed levels, too – formally still applicable in the daily work of the Konzentrationsermittlungskommission in Berlin. The holding of 25 per cent of the shares in a company was considered as being at least included in a general assessment whenever a case is up for judgement or litigation.

Other countries have used similar levels – France has applied 25 or 30 per cent of circulation of the daily press by one owner group, the Dutch voluntary agreement of the newspapers 33 per cent was indicated as the maximum share etc. Other regulations prohibit(ed) any actor to hold more than a certain share of a national TV channel (Greece, Norway) or an actor to expand his share (Sweden) considerably, to hold more than one channel in one area, or to control both newspapers and channels in one area (Sweden, USA). In some countries, where the government retains the ultimate say in distributing concessions for frequencies – no numerical share but only a vague proportion (Sweden) of control or number of actors desirable was incorporated. Sweden’s press subsidy system is an intricate web of different measures and thresholds for newspapers in a weak competitive position, in a non-partisan and automatic way. The expert authority for the distribution of frequencies in the US administration – The Federal Communications Commission – has, obviously, also a political function, composition and instruction, although it acts through an incredibly complicated web of decrees and legal tools.

Thresholds and levels are in most of these systems designed so as to make the decisions on media structure as far as possible automatic, that is, not subject to government decisions or partisan political control. The essence of legal systems is of course to avoid biased political interventions, particularly sensitive in the area of constitutional freedom of expression. Experience shows, however, for example in the United States and Sweden, that it is illusory to try to avoid political controversy. After all, generally, legislation is only one of the factors determining political realities, that is, power relations. Economic power structures in the media market have mostly proven to be much more stable and fundamental to production, distribution and consumption than legal arrangements. I share the view of Noam Chomsky in this respect, expressing himself in an interview reproduced in Le Monde Diplomatique, August 2007.

EU and the Council of Europe, working in parallel on projects to introduce internationally harmonised legal measures thus based these projects upon the presupposition that some kind of assessment, preferably quantitative measures, of the control of individual actors over the media market would work, and that evaluation of the efficiency of measures (in the double sense!) was feasible. One common major difficulty of international cooperation – that is, evaluation of national

229 Legge n. 223 del 6 agosto 1990 - Disciplina del sistema radiotelevisivo pubblico e privato.
policies - developed rather soon to be insuperable in this context. No country was willing to renounce from its own sovereignty, be it only in respect of supplying sufficient adequate and relevant material for an open discussion in an expert environment. The set-up of a network of correspondents supplying statistics, and some kind of independent evaluation of the media situation, turned out to be rather ineffective in the Council of Europe. One difficulty behind this was – and here we are approaching the subject of next section – the diversity of political motives, objectives, and aspirations behind the regulations introduced. As already intimated, the Italian intricate system of regulation, for example, was perhaps the most weird example of a system bearing the signs of being devised to be cosmetic. It is even proposed that regulations were in fact a kind of political deal between different power-holders of the political system and Berlusconi, at least according to a newsflash in La Repubblica, (controlled by Berlusconi’s rival in Italian media and finance, the De Benedetti group) even with the practical and secretarial help of Berlusconi paid people in the Prime Minister's office, responsible for the legislation.

Resolute resistance to any kind of regulation was also launched from the very beginning, within the EU and the Council of Europe equally, by the UK Governments, under Thatcher, Major or Blair. Other governments, like the French, German, Swedish - and obviously Italian -, were changing attitudes, according to the current political camp dominating government, left-wing and liberal regimes being more positive to European harmonisation in this field, right-wing and neo-liberal ones resisting. The attitude of the British government was, to be blunt, rather well in coherence with the attitude of Rupert Murdoch, who actually gave his, very decisive, support to a “New Labour” government under Tony Blair from 1997, cf. below.

The market share, such as sales of copies for newspapers, or audience of broadcasting programmes, is usually taken as the basis for assessing media diversity or concentration. Market is not a very precise notion; in any case it has to be a relevant market for a given product, for example a geographical area, an ethnic or linguistic community, a social group determined by economic situation or educational background or any kind of common interest. Markets might of course also intersect: a media user usually consumes many kinds of products, such as Internet, TV, radio, press, books, recordings. The size of a market determines, to some degree, the total number of possible suppliers of services or products, but in assessing diversity the relative share is obviously in the foreground, rather than an absolute quantity. E.g. if there are 20 operators in a commercial TV market, and 19 of those control only one per cent together, the level of pluralism is generally ranked as low, despite the presence of a high number of actors. For the newspaper market this kind of diversity is easy to measure, since sales figures are well documented, both in the individual companies accounts and because of their relevance for advertisers. For regulatory practice, such as competition regulations, the number of actors in a market, for any kind of prod-

---

230 The OECD has this kind of evaluative action at the centre of its structure, but, on the other hand, does not normally adopt legally binding instruments – which is perhaps the simple reason behind its rather free and sometimes pertinent, even controversial, evaluations of national policies.

231 The Socialist leader Craxi, later escaped to Tunisia to avoid jail for corruption, tried to help Berlusconi by issuing decrees legalising his purchases of local TV stations, and thus establishing a national network. When the Mammi law was finally adopted in 1990 five ministers of the then Andreotti government resigned.

232 Roots in Olivetti, the type-writer manufacturer. A kind of market division (“spartizione di Segrate”), cf Homepage of Gruppo espresso 22 sept 2006, 15:45) between the two rival groups was made in 1991, that is after the adoption of the Mammi law, after the acquisition of Mondadori by Berlusconi’s Fininvest. By this division of market, the Gruppo Espresso was separated from the rest of Mondadori, which is still part of the Berlusconi empire, and joined forces with the A Manzon group, the biggest advertising group in Italy, precededly also partly controlled by Mondadori.) The chairman of the Gruppo Espresso is Carlo de Benedetti.

233 Consumption of media is not a very precise notion either – looking at a TV show, while chatting to your kids or cooking – does that imply “consumption”? It is, if commercial TV, “free” for the individual spectator, and nobody loses a program because someone else “consumes” it...Generally, communication analysis and common basic economic concepts like supply, demand, purchase and sale are not evidently compatible, just like a number of other social areas – cf. the debate on “gift economy” cited above.

234 In Sweden detailed sales figures are available from a common statistics company (Tidningsstatistik AB), for each municipality of the country or other equivalent sales regions.
uct, is less important than the supply share controlled by each actor. Obviously, still, market size also imposes some minimal threshold for most products, viz. it becomes unfeasible to intervene, even if there is a practical monopoly. This has been the case for fresh food, for example.

The view which permeates most discussions on new competition regulations – including cultural products like the media – is that regulations concern supply. The use of the product on the part of the individual consumer is thus not taken into account. This is, obviously, a source of mistakes, since the reputation and status of a particular media product might be a basis of considerable influence, but is not always reflected in sales figures or audience shares in a given area or at a given time. The notion of “cultural capital” is one way of expressing the divergence between those two kinds of aspects. If a particular elite group uses an economically weak but culturally strong product the supply market structure, in economic terms, might not be the only factor to consider. And, reversely, a high level of sales of copies to one category of consumers (readers) of, for example, a newspaper might not at all reflect its economic strength – if advertisers prefer another newspaper.

These complexities are in the background of the lack of success of the legal regulatory approaches so far adopted by national governments, as well as some international agencies like the European Union. Other, perhaps more complex political and structural circumstances are probably more important, however. They will be considered in the following sections. Generally the lack of comparative and operational evaluative measures in the field of regulating media concentration and thereby promoting diversity is blatant. I have already pronounced a suspicion, based on some national projects of legislation, that success was never what was really desired.
From diversity to pluralism - the conceptual space of cultural politics

A DEFENCE OF CONCEPTUAL INQUIRIES

After the preceding discussion on some of the concrete complications of formal legal regulation, of the structure of the power of cultural production we shall return to a more ethereal space of conceptual interfaces, aiming at winding up with some political commonalities.

Cultural policy, including media policy, is permeated by controversy, from the conceptual level down to issues of budget allocations. The foregoing stories of some complexities of the market and its implications for legislation, as well as the hair-splitting exercises underlying some immaterial law cases, illustrate the “interfacial” difficulties between everyday cultural production, distribution and consumption on one hand, and formal regulation on the other. Regulation in our society is mostly understood as written regulation; even case law in a modern society has to be written down, documented – that is, formulated in language. Modern, and post-modern, societies are, on top of that, as much as “traditional” societies, permeated by all kinds of habits, cultural features, unwritten rules, customs, etc. This is the task of ethnology, sociology and cultural studies, to describe and analyse, that is, mostly also to convert to written language. This, means, inevitably, making choices between more or less stable terms, linked to conceptual distinctions, definitions etc.

Although “policy makers” and politically engaged ordinary citizens sometimes accuse the academic sphere of being bogged down in conceptual exercises not relevant to decision making, this is often misleading. Political controversy and problems in policy-making involve double-talk, confusions, deliberate switches of meanings. Ambiguities in, for example, government bills are not seldom deliberate, thus giving rise to future disputes about the efficiency and effects of regulations and other policy measures. Some of the deadlocks of recent European policy-making on media structure are model examples of such conceptual battles.

The controversial nature of media policy is not a controversy on a theoretical level; it is a controversy over power in a central political area. Conceptual controversy is a reflection, or a source, of a struggle for power, dominance, influence or hegemony. The “idealist” framework applied in this study represents this perspective.

Conceptual issues, in any discourse guided by a common intention for a dialogue, have to be tackled, in some more or less systematic manner, since leaving them aside will bring dialogue into a halt. An absence of will to approach conceptual differences may also express a lack of interest in a dialogue.

A. Definitions

Explicit definitions might be accepted by the (majority, influential, dominant majority) of the participants in a communicative process or field, at a number of different levels of precision. They may close, at least for a period, a discussion in a community. Definitions are necessary to “regimented” discourse, whether scientific, legal or special professional, but have also an important role in ordinary talk.

Definitions are already formally treated in Aristotle’s logic; classically a definition specifies out of a more comprehensive kind, a genus: Man is specified as a rational (=specific difference) animal (=genus, larger kind).

235 In various parts of both the “Organon” and the “Rhetoric”..
Definitions are expected to deliver higher degrees of precision\(^{236}\) in a certain section of language. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess\(^{237}\) suggested a system for accounting for the relations between meaning, interpretation and precision. A higher degree of precision, is arrived at by an interpretation of an expression, excluding some possible and plausible interpretations and thus narrows the scope of that expression. Definitions are thus mostly “negative”, excluding some meanings, senses or interpretations of an expression or term (simple or complex) in a language. Definitions might be regarded as equations: the expressions on both sides of a definition are different, have not the “same meaning”, but refer to the same set of objects, and therefore may be used equivalently.

Both sides of a definition are thus not exactly synonymous\(^{238}\), to be more precise is to say more, by excluding some possible interpretations. This has some resemblance to the “theory of information” in Shannon and Weaver’s technical/probabilistic sense: to be more informative is to be less probable.

Some definitions are more exclusive than others, and some go counter to the ordinary use of a term. The latter case applies to “stipulating” definitions, where you agree on a meaning in a special discourse, in which the participants are expected to accept innovative language. This kind of definition is common in scientific discourse, but also in religious, political and other kinds of discourses where the participants are expected to overcome the difficulties by “lifting” from traditional uses of a term. The precondition of a stipulative definition is that it is made available by clear declaration, for example one saying that “from now on, and in this text or discourse, I use the term X in the sense \(A\)”. Stipulation presupposes honesty and openness - otherwise it does not work.

A kind of definition, rather different from the more formal or linguistic sort treated hitherto, is the so-called ostensive definition, central in both Husserl’s and Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language\(^{239}\). Ostension means showing: you point to some phenomenon and declare or say: “this is what I mean by A”. Ostension might be seen as a kind of stipulation, since it presupposes that the communicative community understands and accepts the relation between the ostension and the expression. It is arbitrary in the sense that you decide about the use of a term, although the use might be deviant from ordinary use. On the other hand this decision is more or less taken to be collective, since the reference to some act of ostension is taken to be generically human. A lot of meanings of expressions are regarded as “rooted” in such ostensive gestures – that is “action-oriented” rather than “logical” or footed on language only\(^{240}\). Stipulation illustrates the “arbitrariness” of the connection between meaning and word - there is no necessity in our saying ‘bird’ in English but ‘oiseau’ in French. Arbitrariness does not imply, however, that you are, within a social context, free to use the term you like. On the contrary, communication rests upon the lack of freedom in this respect, upon conventions or “closures” made in a collective context. Only obedience to the rules, including rules of definition, and other rules of extending use of language, will make other people understand what you say.

**B. Circumscription**

In less formal contexts, that is the majority of all discourse, the use of a term is rather “explained” or rewritten (retold) in a more indirect way, giving a context in which the term is used, rather than a formal or explicit definition. An intermediate stage between formal linguistic or

\(^{236}\) An English neologism was proposed by the English philosopher Michael Dummett: ‘precisification’ caters for the distinction between being precise and becoming or making more precise. Oral information by Prof. Per Martin-Löf, Stockholm.

\(^{237}\) Naess 1961.

\(^{238}\) The subject of synonymy is extremely complex, to say that two different wordings have the same meaning although one is more precise might even be regarded as a contradiction. Naess introduced the notion of ‘depth of intention’ to resolve this issue.

\(^{239}\) For a fresh analysis of Husserl’s philosophy of language, notably “occasional” (indexical) expressions, see Karl Weigelt 2008.

\(^{240}\) One school of philosophical semantics, often referring to Wittgenstein, has formulated The Causal Theory of Reference on the basis of this theory.
verbal definitions and circumscribing explanations of meaning might be the “operational” definitions, where a relatively precise use of language is suggested, by the introduction of a terminological apparatus in which the term or word to be defined is inserted – without aspiring at a formal verbal definition. This is one version of a kind of “functional” (in a logical sense) approach to analysis of language.  

Much of analytic endeavour in literary and other textual research is rather a more informal kind of articulation or interpretation of an already available text or discourse. By grasping a term or an expression, in its context (including its social context) and describing it, the term is better understood and some agreement as to its use is acquired.  

The border-lines between formal definitions, operational definitions and circumscriptions are not very sharp and a circumscription might include ostension.

Some consequences

Both ways of approaching conceptual issues illustrate the interrelationship between the meaning of language expressions and other phenomena in our world, both in the “natural” world and in the social world (including the cultural world).

A concept is 1) conceived by someone, 2) used, in a context and a situational surrounding, 3) for a purpose, more or less specific. This is the well-known “Organon theory” of language, suggested by Karl Bühler 1934, and taken up by Wittgenstein.

Mostly this purpose is taken for granted as being one of telling things, describing, though rarely solely this one purpose.

Other forms of communication, however, have quite different main purposes, like sermons, singing, telling tales, publicity, propaganda etc. And also, of course, this is the case for most political discourse. It is “strategic communication”. The purpose is here both to inform and to argue for a particular purpose, to convince someone, to defeat an opponent by argument or, in more doubtful cases, by blurring circumstances and employing linguistic confusion. It is well known that the success of political discourse depends on singling out an area where you have a strong case, and to leave out those aspects that complicate your reasoning or rhetoric. You do not lie in these cases, but you choose to talk about other aspects of the same thing as you opponent.

A common way of doing this is to slip between various levels of precision. This is more likely to succeed when someone, in a dispute, only recently has become familiar with distinctions.

In other cases, when the purpose is more an open discussion among equal partners, such as a community of researchers or officials in an administration, slips of meaning do not cause any harm, for example, a general public debate often tolerates a slip back to less precise interpretations of a term. But slips in precision might cause considerable harm by simply blurring the issue, and neglecting, deliberately, progress made. This might be, more often than commonly assumed, the case in political or ideological debates.

‘Pluralism’ or ‘diversity’ are not rarely terms with such implications, just as ‘variation’, ‘concentration’/’consolidation’, integration etc. in cultural and media policies. One task of conceptual work in these spheres, would then be to demonstrate slips from more precise to less precise use of terms by participants in the debate – participants who are mostly trained writers or speakers, politicians, editors-in-chief, publishers and others.

241 Classical predicate logic, from Frege and onwards, regards predicates in general as “sentences/propositions with one variable” or “sentential/propositional functions”. A classical work on definitions is v Wright.

242 The English term ‘context’ is notoriously ambiguous, covering a more literal association to only texts, in the customary sense of a written text in a historical language as well as the circumstances around the text, ultimately the entire world. A more extended sense of the notion of text has become accepted and even philosophically sanctioned /enshrined/ condoned by Jacques Derrida in his “grammatology”242. This notion also includes all custom or use of language to be a text . In Derrida’s sense all social research is research into texts.

243 Signal, Symbol, Appell were the three functions mentioned by Buehler.
This work will rarely convince those who profit from these slips to refrain from doing so, unless they are forced to, by the pressure of political processes, and perhaps in some cases public opinion. One should not underestimate the value of some terms the definition of which are generally accepted. A trademark battle is an important ingredient in political debates – and precision might take the edge out of a term being a precious symbol of a movement or a group, while benefiting other interests of a political nature.

This does not imply a general theory of conspiracy, only a conviction that these things are quite normal in human communication. Chomsky, Herman and McChesney have certainly pointed to structures and actors that serve partisan interests, and are not necessarily serving the public interest\textsuperscript{244} - presumed to involve democratic rule, based on freedom, equality and sister- or brotherhood. Though the cases presented by these authors have a high degree of persuasive power, the scenario of a systematic, organised “propaganda model” (in “Manufacturing Consent”) seems to underestimate the commonplace nature of these phenomena in ordinary discourse.

A lexicon of cultural production

A thesis: A substantial part of the public political debate on media and culture, in the narrow sense of the role of the public sector in this area, is geared to problem formulae, which dissolve themselves, if a basic understanding or even agreement is reached on a number of conceptual matters.

Since, however, in many cases, political dispute in this field is dependent on the possibility to avoid an agreement on the terms used, terms become pivotal. In other words, while communicative action is a basic way of coming to grips with conflicts of power that someway or other have to be solved, in order to in some way uphold or restore social equilibrium, it also serves, reversely, digging trenches between camps that, for other more general reasons, need symbolic props.

At present, media structure development risks to overturn an equilibrium between interests. Crudely, public interest, in Western societies on one side, tends to become a gradually weaker party, while other interests, notably corporate interests, on the other, tend to become growingly influential. This is the gist of “feudalisation”, suggested above, a tendency which, under diverse formulations, is greeted by some and feared by others, or just observed as a development to which adaptation is necessary (Habermas\textsuperscript{?}). The economic system of contemporary (post-modern, or late modern) capitalism is not a guarantee against destruction of democratic forms of government – after all, democracy in its genuine form is still only about 70 years old in the history of women and men\textsuperscript{245}. Many, along with myself, as said above, have pointed to the fact that present-day development, away from industrial capitalism to financial market capitalism, service or “experience” economies, might upset familiar structures of social order, alike with familiar concepts of democratic rule.

Understanding, and in some cases agreement, on some of the relevant concepts, might be one way to advance a reflection, useful also for policy purposes, although consensus is unlikely to emerge. A study applying a scholarly point of view should not take for granted neither the existence of conceptual unity of the subject field, nor a general desire of establishing such unity. Politics is praxis, viz. structure of action, but words interplay with practise.

Approaching this interplay, with the media sector as a master copy for policy-making on cultural production, a policy lexicon might be suggested – focussing on “external” production and distribution structures, central to much controversy throughout the existence of the mass media sector, since the establishment of the mass-produced newspapers at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} C.

\textsuperscript{244} Again, McQuail has supplied a classic devoted to the notion of the public interest and media. McQuail (1992).

\textsuperscript{245} Disregarding phenomena such as Athenian democracy, Icelandic Althing rule, English parliamentarism, Swedish four-estate representation, United States constitutional rule (with slavery and no general right of vote) etc. from earlier epochs. China and, earlier, South Korea and Taiwan are examples of capitalist authoritarian regimes, not to speak of the “US backyard” of Latin American military dictatorships, for decades.
The other side of the coin - uses and users - have only later come into focus, mostly in a scholarly context, as in cultural studies, cultural sociology etc. Some aspects were, however, involved in the political battles earlier, e.g. from a moral(istic) point of view – introducing censorship and control over cinema films etc.

This external structure emphasis is mostly based on empirical frequency studies on the media. The crucial terms of policy-making seem to circulate in a space where ‘diversity’ and ‘pluralism’ are reference terms. For the understanding of the subject the notion of ‘content’ seems to be underlying most other conceptual formations, despite its seemingly deviation from the “external” structural focus. This notion will therefore be submitted to a somewhat more detailed treatment than the other. So here is the “lexicon”:

- Content
- Diversity
- Measure
- Policy
- Public
- Quality

Content

The notion of content is notoriously problematic, and for good reasons, since it goes back to the roots of Western systematic theoretical thought 2500 years ago. This concerns the general, more or less theoretical or philosophical, level (Cf. Cavallin 1997) as well as the more specific use of ‘content’ in culture, communication and media research. Media content analysis was established in the United States by two classics. One is Bernard Berelson’s work from 1952 – conceived within a rigid framework of quantitative sociology and its Neo-Positivist philosophy of science. Another important systematic work is written by Klaus Krippendorff in his ‘Content Analysis’ from 1980. Krippendorff criticises Berelson’s work from 1952, precisely on account of its lack of definition of the central notion of content. Later communication research has tended to criticize on a more general basis the ambitions of “content analysis” – it nowadays occupies a much more modest position as one of several useful instruments for analysis of texts.

Berelson does, however, offer a definition, though it is rather straightforward, and he himself refers back to an earlier tradition:

“In the classic sentence identifying the process of communication - "who says what, to whom and with what effect" – communication content is the what.'

Actually, Krippendorff does not himself propose a formal definition, at least not in explicit terms. After having pointed to Berelson’s shortcoming, he dives right into the waters of different aspects of his own version of content analysis, presumably to “operationalise” the notion instead of offering a new verbal definition. So, reading Berelson, we are left with the rather scholastic-sounding “whatness” (quidditas was a familiar term in medieval ontology and logic) as an alternative to “content”. The exclusion of the who and what effect, gives some clue, but not very detailed guidance. The rest of the definitional work is, in Krippendorff’s work, supposed to be performed by the “operational” guidelines.

Looking at the concept from another point of view, however, the distinction, or separation, between ‘content’ on one hand and ‘who’ and ‘effect’ becomes quite difficult to maintain. In he

246 FOOTNOTE NUMBERING FAILING FROM FOOTNOTE 250 TO FOOTNOTE 272, THOUGH THE TOTAL NUMBER IS OK.

251 Both these authors came from other traditions of text analysis than hermeneutics or philology. Berelson took his degrees in library science and Krippendorff started out as an engineer.
“triangular” structure of linguistic expressions suggested by Bühler – ‘content’ might represent both the “symbolic” aspect, and the entire contextual function of an expression, that is, the functions of “Sign” and “Appell” in Bühler’s terms, or its “performative” or “illocutionary” aspects in later “linguistic philosophy”. For who could say, for example, that the “content” of the military command “Halt!” is only the “sheer” (=symbolic, in Bühler’s terms) linguistic meaning of the imperative verb used?

Furthermore, pragmatist meaning theory, emanating from the US philosopher Ch. S. Peirce, equally contends that meaning always involves three components, is a three-place relation: a sign S (1) means something (2) to somebody (3) – or a relation between a symbol, an object and a user. Pearce does not specify the kind of relationships he referred to. Since meaning is in many respects equal to ‘content’ (at least in the non-psychological sense mostly applied today) ‘content’ would therefore always also involve the who and the what effect.

This “triad” was later repeated in “speech act philosophy”, represented by philosophers as John L. Austin and John Searle, following Wittgenstein (who is said to have been greatly influenced in his later philosophy by Bühler’s suggestion ). Austin incorporates “perlocutionary” (effect-related) aspects of a sign, as well as “locutionary” (“the pure meaning”), and “illocutionary” (actions consisting in saying something) aspects as different sides of the content of a sign. Actually most kinds of theory of language and meaning in later decades - following Austin - have tended to include precisely those aspects into meaning content, which Berelson (representing a kind of Positivist tradition) excluded. Berelson’s notion of content might be interpreted as the “locutionary” aspects of linguistic acts performed in the mass media. It is – with an understate- ment - far from certain that these aspects account for the essential constituents of the phenomena which “content analysis” is out to examine, such as political ideological colouring etc. Content analysis tries to gain a comparative view of a large material, such as a whole month or year of reports in a newspaper or several newspapers on a particular subject, by way of marking some basic properties of these reports.

Content analysis mostly approached a text, or material in broadcasting programmes, from the point of view of diverse genres and relationships between genres in the mass media, that is to classify how much is sports, news, public affairs, entertainment, publicity etc. in a media product. Going into deeper aspects – “the real content” some would say! – of these genres (what does the journalist tell in TV on the latest political events…) depends on a this general classification of material, programatically superficial in one sense. A typical example is an examination of political affiliations of a news outlet – normally this kind of analysis depends on the positions the outlet takes in politically clearly defined controversies, and the analysis is simply a registration or coding of each text/material bit. The coding is up to the analyst’s judgement, and normally binary (yes or no). This kind of examination, just like opinion polls, seldom entirely misses its point. On the other hand, most layers of interpretation of a text are impossible to grasp, since they are not “manifest” and accordingly left out. An air of triviality often therefore surrounds these analyses.

Focussing on the other half of the expression ‘content analysis’, that is, the part which does not refer to the object of the analysis, but the analysis itself, Berelson says as follows: ..”content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson 1952:18, my italics).

If this formula is thought to “operationalise” the notion of content by way of a definition of content analysis it seems pretty pointless. The predicates “objective” and “systematic” appear rather empty, and value-laden, since all scholarly analyses of texts share these ambitions. The

---

Peirce’s theory was relatively for very long little known in his home country, so perhaps at least Berelson should be excused...

The notion of ‘speech act’ was already suggested by the phenomenologist Adolf Reinach in a work 1913 on the theoretical foundations of civil law. Cf. article in Wikipedia Eng. Unfortunately I have not been able to confirm the link between Bühler and Wittgenstein from Wittgenstein exegetes.
specificity of the technique is thus being “quantitative”, that is measurable in employing mathematical, numerical, terms.

On the “object” side of content analysis, let me just observe that Berelson’s suggestion implies 1) that some features or constituents of communication are *not* content, and 2) that some content is not “manifest”. This latter point is perhaps more important than the first one, since precisely the criticism against “content analysis” is that it is consistently “superficial”, that is, does not take into account “presuppositions” or contextual dependencies, born out by interpretation. The quality of being “manifest” is obviously dependent on the knowledge of the interpreter, reader or listener.

Berelson actually represents, from this point of view, a step backward from the already cited rather simple insights enounced by Arne Naess already in the 1930s – if we do not (as apparently Berelson, Lazarsfeld and other “positivist” sociologists did not) respect the findings and experiences of a vast tradition of interpretation in philology, exegetics, history, literary analysis and philosophy – most distinctively in the hermeneutic tendency, from Schleiermacher and onwards. If content analysis satisfies itself with something that is understood as “manifest” it cuts most links to, historical, cultural, linguistic understanding and interpretation of text, be it written, spoken or in images, indeed with communication itself, to be really rigid.

Still content analysis in the tradition described above gives results worthwhile – for example for a large material, a superficial scanning, and categorizing of the matter, checking for general opinions (“yes” or “no”) on relatively easily formulated questions. Opinion polls work, for specified purposes.

Although Berelson and Krippendorff both acknowledge their debt to more “qualitative” traditions, they seem to hold that their own approach – inspired by the quantitative sociology of Lasswell, Lazarsfeld and others – is superior to other means of examining media content. 20 years after Krippendorff’s book, these aspirations rather seem to be over-ambitious, since statistical approaches, though sometimes indispensable, are complementary to other methods of research into texts (taken in the wide sense of Derrida).

The “operationalisation” of the notion of content by way of “content analysis” could thus not be regarded as definite, and the politically, as well as legally, central notion of content resists efforts to make it more precise. This may sound worrying, since the notion of content constitutes a demarcation line in much of the political debate for non-interventions in cultural production. Alternative ways of continuing an examination might therefore be sought for.

One such way is to look for opposite or contrasting terms or concepts. This “dialectic” way of clarifying the notion may be supplemented by outright negative definitions.

One classical opposition to ‘content’ is ‘form’ – often ‘content’ is replaced by ‘matter’ in this pair of concepts. This opposition has its roots in Platonic and Aristotelian logic, and has been already referred to in the preface as being relevant for a crucial semantical distinction – highly salient for media studies.

For other aspects of the notion of content it is clear that, in the media sphere, by ‘content’ we do not mean sound, scribbles on a paper, ink, configurations on a screen, nor is it a media

---

A dichotomy which, in the sequel of Bourdieu’s and other similar results, seems difficult to uphold in social sciences as such.

A dissertation at Stockholm University by Anders Sahlström in 2000 applied some of the statistical methods for an analysis of sources and media quality.

We are in good philosophical company, however: already Edmund Husserl, in his pioneering Logical Investigations 1900-01, pointed to the weaknesses of the term and suggested more precise and theory-based notions.

One central notion in media studies is “event” – but it is often not clear whether this term refers to something outside the media story or is an element of the story itself. In the former case medieval logic would perhaps have classified the use of the term as having “formal (or natural) supposition”, since it refers in its normal way. In the latter case the use is different, as it was more internal. Also an entirely fictional story portrays “events”, which are just elements of the fiction, not anything that has occurred. The use of a word about itself – as in the sentence “Snow” has four letters – is also, as it were, confined to the internal context. The uses are, of course, not entirely parallel in other respects.
company, its owners, the employed people, telephones, buildings etc. All these objects might, in a physical sense, be considered as “contained” in larger units, or parts of them.

Another opposition pertains between object and content: the content is about some object. Or, more precisely, someone refers by a content to an object. The object is thus something other than (“transcendent to” in philosophical lingo) the content. The content is, in this understanding, always linked to some meaningful act, directed towards some (real or imagined) object. This act could be a perception, a feeling, a ‘thought’, an act of will, or an action that is in some other sense ‘conscious’, like speech acts, loving or cooking.

The objective (or purpose) of an action might also be regarded as its meaning or content. The “object” of an action is not parallel to the object of e.g. a perception, the action is doing something with the object – e.g. destroying it, changing it. A perception is usually associated with “passivity” rather than “action” or activity.

An object of a mental act is mostly thought to “be there” – present - (albeit perhaps only in imagination) while an objective is essentially future, though a goal or an aim might also be “present”, as an imagined future state. An object of an action, might be for example 1) an instrument (in playing a viol, the viol and the bow are the objects of my action) or 2) something affected by it (I repaired a car). It is not common to classify things that emerge from an action as objects of them: if I made a pie, it is rather a product of my action, though evidently an object of my eating-action afterwards. The notion of product has been discussed at length already above, being introduced as successor to the notion of content by the Polish philosopher Kazimierz Twardowski 100 years ago, replacing the philosophically contestable notion of content as a singular event in the mental experience, rather than an immaterial or “ideal” (formal) constituent, common to all users of a language or a concept. Since the idea of content is central in drawing legal border-lines to public interventions in cultural production, some more details in the reasoning behind this change of concepts were justified, even at the cost of going into some linguistic specificities, noting that the distinction between inner object and “ordinary” object – we might term them “external” - does not coincide with the distinction in ordinary grammatical theory between direct and indirect object in a sentence or a proposition.

The notion of object in the linguistic and grammatical sphere is thus, in several ways, ambiguous. This ambiguity, involving the key term “content”, as its dialectical opposite, has a semantic parallel in the famous Fregean distinction between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) of an expression, key notions in logical and semantic theory after Frege, albeit by no means uncontested. Understanding the complications of the pair of notions “content” and “object” on a general level of action (communicative action notably), including legal regulations, therefore also becomes a necessity. Twardowski’s innovative – though nearly 100 years old! - paper might be used for this purpose.

---

One exception is, precisely, the “material supposition” where the content in some sense might be said to refer to itself. The terminology is far from clear.

This is a very complex discussion though, since perception is usually thought to be more “active” than “pure sensation”… A great discussion on this subject took place in the end of the 19th C – and Gestalt Theory is centered precisely around the “spontaneity” or “passivity” of certain perceptive structures, earlier taken as “constructed”. Philosophical theories of perception, on the other hand, identified perception and being in general – Berkeley’s famous dictum was “esse est percipi”, “to be is to be perceived”.

Again, a cluster of philosophical difficulties are hidden in these seemingly innocent descriptions. The English language has oscillates in the translation of the German term “Vorstellung”, crucial in discussions on psychology at the end of the 19th C. It was sometimes rendered by “presentation”, sometimes by “npresentation” – and in this oscillation itself the hesitation as to the temporal aspect of objectives or, broader, “intentional experiences”, to use Husserl’s term, seems to be expressed.

O czynnosciach i wytworach (On Actions and Products)

The grammatical ‘direct’ or ‘accusative’ object covers both inner and external objects of an action, a song is a direct object, albeit inner, the car is a direct object, but “external”. The ‘indirect’ object (in ‘I gave her a ring’) would seldom if ever be called a ‘content’. Traditional grammar allows of two objects, in two different senses here. In Latin grammar the case of dative marked the indirect object, the accusative case marking the direct object. Sometimes one tends to forget the rather violent grammatical term linking a direct object to an “accusation”? The case of the indirect object is softer: the “dative” case is the case of gift!
Twardowski’s generalization of the notion of products to all actions, distinguishing between products of a physical, psychical and psycho-physical nature, the last category containing artefacts, viz. products that exist in a physical medium but “thanks to” a mental action. Traces, and linguistic signs, are, according to Twardowski, prime examples of artefacts.

Using artefacts as a successor to “content” might shatter the basis of any kind of content analysis – irrespective of whether we analyse a literary work, a painting, a film or newspaper texts. The basis of our work, the subject matter of it, is in all these cases not some kind of abstruse “what”, but artefacts, that is letters, sentences etc. The meaning or sense of these artefacts is what we are left with, if we can cope with the codes and interpretation mechanisms required to “read” the signs. This makes “content analysis” a wider occupation than coding for frequent occurrences of some term or some property – it coincides by and large with hermeneutics.

In the case of mass media, the analysis of media “contents” does not deal with individual newspaper copies etc. but the newspaper as an immaterial object (defined and protected under copyright law).

Content analysis in media research involve written texts, pictures, movies, oral recordings or programmes as well as multimedia products, legally speaking, immaterial objects, the essential character of which is that they do not occur only once in one place, but might be repeated and copied. Other immaterial objects of a “higher order” in the cultural production also play a vital role – such as rights, which, albeit tied to objects, are not identical to them. Rights might be property rights (most interestingly here: of immaterial objects), but also royalty rights, moral (ideal) rights as in European tradition of authors’ rights etc. A right is mostly a transferable and heritable immaterial artefact.

Being an immaterial object does mean being completely non-material, in the sense of being independent of matter, after all a celluloid or video film, or a book are material. The point is that the what, the content/product which we analyse, is not the physical object, the singular copy or “token”, but the “type” or the “work”. However, though a work has once been created it is there, even if all tokens of it disappear - even the token occurring as memory or representation in somebody’s mind - it is doubtful whether it any longer exists. And furthermore, approaching metaphysical discussions going on at least since Plato: is the consciousness of human beings something that is necessarily tied to the “token” body? Or does it exist prior to and after that body? Is consciousness, with all its content and constructions, experiences, etc. an immaterial object, just like any book or film? And thus “repeatable”? Immaterial objects might be repeatable and exist in many places at once, but are they indisputably “timeless”, that is, non-material in an absolute sense?

The substitution of ‘content’ by ‘product’ may be complicated by the spatial connotations of ‘content’ in some languages. While the English and French ‘con-’ do not give a spatial connotation, corresponding expressions in German (or Swedish) do. But still, also in those languages, it sounds funny to say that the content of today’s issue of ‘Dagens Nyheter’ or ‘Frankfurter Allgemeine’ is in the building of the company, whether in Stockholm or Frankfurt am Main, though it is quite normal to say that the content of today’s issue of Frankfurter Allgemeine is in the physical copy I happen to hold in my hands.

The entire discussion above may appear merely to be a hair-splitting scholastic terminological one, as indeed many semiotic disputes seem to, but has far-reaching political, ethical, legal and economic consequences. This emerges from discussions on screen violence, pornography and censorship, on trade in immaterial goods, viz. one of the most expanding economic activities.

Actually, digitization seemingly “dematerializes” even copies – it is not as evident to call electronic traces in superconductors material as video tapes, books or newspaper copies.

We are just one step away from the theological dispute between Thomas Aquinas and Averroës on the individuality of the soul...

For a brief survey of some aspects of media content, see Mattelart.

Nothing said against scholasticism by this; I contend that such discussions might be decisive for life and death in no few cases.
in a global economy, in which “experience services” (such as tourism) and cultural products tend to surpass material goods in value. “Content is king” in the world trade – yes, well, but what is content? And, in legal cultural production: The idea of quality as a hallmark in regulations for authors’ rights/copyright, public broadcasting, as well as interventions like censorship or other legal restrictions on moving images, are dependent on this notion.

Content, in these immaterial contexts, appears – contrary to the traditional opposition between form and matter – as essentially not located in time and space, although originating in time and space. The application of a distinction between form and matter also played an important role also inside theoretical debates in modern times – most pregnant perhaps in the Russian aesthetic formalist school (Shklovskij), and linguistics (Roman Jakobson). It is difficult to associate, in this context, this distinction to an opposition between content and some other level of being (such as individual exemplars, or concrete things) since this debate concerns different aspects of primarily immaterial objects like literary works or language systems.

The “ideality” of content, or its “immateriality” has been questioned many times in recent reflection on language and understanding. Jacques Derrida (along with other “post-modernists”) would surely have held that content is very much something spatial, timely and material. The very category of artefacts in general seems to defy a dichotomy as such, since they live a kind of intermediary life: on one hand most artefacts are presented as material, as the emblematic examples of a work of art, like sculpture or painting, show; on the other hand artistic, literary, or scientific works, equally emblematically, may exist in several copies, precisely legally defined as identical in many places and times.

The discussion of the notion of content thus brings us back into ontology, that is, the categorizing of “what there is”, and notably the number of these categories to be preferred. The most favoured number of ontological categories since Antiquity is perhaps 2 – idea and phenomenon in Plato, form and matter in Aristotle etc. But also 1 has many adherents – whether metaphysical idealists, like Hegel, “neutral monists” like Ernst Mach, William James and Bertrand Russell, “materialists” like Democritus, Karl Marx, “reists” like Franz Brentano in his later philosophy, or Willard van Orman Quine. Karl Popper spoke of a Third realm, just as the logician Frege – though in different meanings; Popper refused to recognize that artefacts could be incorporated into either of the categories of physical objects or abstract entities, and Frege refused to amalgamate senses (Sinne) with the category of physical objects or numbers. The most “generous” ontologies might be said to be those proposed by Spinoza, Twardowski, and Nicolai Hartmann, who did, each in a specific manner, leave the door open to an indefinite number of categories of being.

So what is content, again? Another angle of the discussion might be to study the notion as a metaphor. If we look at a newspaper copy, the distinction between the paper as a physical object and its content might be dependent on what kind of interest you take in that particular copy. The newspaper has of course a physical content: fibres, printing ink, pages. In this sense ‘content’ is more or less synonymous with ‘part’: my copy could never have the same parts as your copy. The interest I have in this newspaper might be to light a fire, not to read it. Other interests might be as primary as well, for example in societies, which do not produce sufficient toilet-paper, or wrapping paper…

Normally it is, however, taken for granted that the primary interest is not linked to content in this physical sense, but rather to the newspaper in its capacity as an artefact, that is, some physical object “loaded” with a meaning, something, which we have “attributed” to it.

Actually the idea of content of an artefact like a newspaper or a CD is parallel to the idea of the human soul or mind. Both discussions are extremely difficult to manage and to operationalise, since they do not only involve legal and very concrete administrative measures or concerns

---

Popper
strictly speaking: "physical" is an object described by a particular set of sciences...
but also linguistic distinctions which intersect between languages and within various discourses of diverse cultures and communities.

The philosophical discussion on content at the end of the 19th century terminated in some kind of escape from the general notion of content as such. New, and at least philosophically more adapted and operational notions – like the Twardowskian “psychical” and “psycho-physical” products or the Husserlian “intentional lived experience (intentionales Erlebnis)” - upheld one kind of dichotomy between content and object, based on the idea that every “presentation” or mental act (instance of lived experience – Erlebnis) had both a content and an object, a distinction, which still underlies most modern discussions in semantics, as well as cognitive science and phenomenology. The “anti-material” or anti-psychological notion of content, as meaning or sense, is still fundamental to most modern interpretations of formal logic. The content of a mental event is not any particular event “in” my brain or those of other human beings, but a phenomenon or a topic of quite another ontological (and epistemological) status. It has not got a definite place or time, it is repeatable, and transmittable (communicable) while remaining the same etc. Still it is not identical with a particular token of a sign. Changes of meaning/content results in in new meanings, but it is hard do say when we have exactly the same meaning, since the identity criterion of a meaning seems ultimately to be some form of communicative success, thus a real event in time and space. Recent discourse analysis (Laclau and Mouffe, resting on Foucault, and Derrida) proposes an entirely new dynamic model of meaning, anti-“essentialist”, anti-“ideal” etc.

Also, a kind of break-down of a simple notion of content is the result of a development of the systematic study of signs, expressions and languages from the beginning the 19th century, by Humboldt, Peirce, Frege and Husserl, to name but a few. In particular it has been the case after the study of different layers of signification, meaning and reference was taken up by the semiotics inspired by Saussure, but also aestheticians like Benedetto Croce, continued by speech act theory inspired by Husserl and Reinhach and outlined by Bühler, followed by Wittgenstein and “Oxford” speech act philosophy, Searle and others. This subject is also pursued in systematic shapes by Barthes, Foucault and Derrida as well as by cultural studies schools. These strands of thought emphasize that all physical objects could fulfill some function of meaning in a given society, that is, “carry” some content in the sense referred to above. In this vein Klaus Krippendorff has actually come back into this discussion from a new angle, viz. that of design theory. Also immaterial artefacts could – albeit being meanings in some sense – “carry” meanings of a more complex nature.

Visual art has demonstrated the complexity of the situation: Marcel Duchamps, André Breton, and more recent happening or installation artists, demonstrate the possibility of turning the usual function of an object into a sign, or into “art”. The interpretation and re-interpretation of meaning-carriers and the situation of their meanings into systems of meanings, in “arenas” etc. occupy numerous scholars in cultural studies, not forgetting forerunners like Croce, Bühler, as well as Ernst Cassirer in his “Philosophy of symbolic forms”.

Content of singular expressions vs. the ”space of opinion”

The analysis of content, also in a more narrow media context, might thus be regarded as a variety of textual analysis, breaking out a number of factors and investigating the occurrence of these factors in several different texts. The factor is mostly the occurrence of one given set of words or synonymous words in other texts. It is, as such, neither more exact nor “objective” than other forms - its primary asset is the more extensive range of quantitative material, which is thus counterweighted by a lower degree of interpretative range.

A rather deviant manner of talking about content has been employed by Denis McQuail in a contribution to the volume Questioning Cultural Studies (McQuail 1997 in Ferguson&Golding

Laclau, Mouffe, Foucault, as presented by Winther Jørgensen
Krippendorff (2007)
(1997:39-56) – a critical examination of the tradition of cultural studies in the media field. McQuail talks of “regulation of content, and thus of culture.”

McQuail’s prima facie equation of culture and content may bewilder. Normally the content of media, though part of cultural production, is narrower than culture: a lot of art and a lot of other kinds of symbolic expressions, customs, beliefs, categories of thought, and other parts of our “life-world” are not content of media, as illustrated by the sketchy table on page 83 in this study.

Regulation of media, accordingly, is part of regulations of culture, but not co-extensional. The somewhat alarmist sounding of the notion of regulation of culture is obviously less scary if this is taken into account. Regulation, beside being part of cultural production itself, obviously concerns many parts of cultural production, including the media structure, but also some aspects of media products, such as cinema, the Internet, copyright etc. But the point is in associating media to culture here seems to be a plea for minimizing the scope of interventions from the political sphere into forms of expression, opinions and political or other ideologies etc. Central to debates on “content” in the media are political views expressed, but also religious, philosophical and other material: the idea prevailing in liberal societies is that expressions within this sphere of life should be as free as possible.

Media policy in a particular manner demonstrates the political sensitivity of the notion of content to democratic governments. The state is not, generally, supposed to interfere with media content, but merely expected to promote satisfactory conditions of work, or guarantee a framework (political, legal) allowing media (mass media) to fulfil their tasks in a democratic system (information, opinion forming, examination and debate...).

The notion of content serves in this context to establish a criterion for democratic rule: it could not prevail, unless there is a sufficient freedom of opinion on political, religious, ideological etc. matters, expressed in the content of media. Moreover, this freedom presupposes the existence of a diversity (pluralism) of content and therefore sets narrow limits to intervention, warranted or necessary, in a democratic structure.

The diversity of content of the (mass) media has been debated, outside the academic community in political contexts nearly since the mass production and distribution of printed products begun, a little more than a hundred years ago. The near-to permanence of this debate might in itself give some ground for scepticism towards alarmist signals, and inspire a healthy vigilance towards outbursts of moral panic.

Before abandoning the tricky task of trying to settle what the central term ‘content’ stands for in this struggle, one further major complication should, unfortunately, be added.

Content of the media might concern individual media products (cultural products), such as newspaper issues, broadcast programmes, or to some amalgamated set of these products. However, these products and their particular media spheres, or cultural spheres in general, could not be considered in separation from other spheres. First, because, for example, television, radio, newspapers, magazines and web-sites do all, more or less, relate to each other in one “media landscape”. Consumers employ, for various purposes, several products, concurrently or in various combinations. Second, because the content of one particular cultural product has, nearly indefinitely many “layers”, as indicated by the talk of “discourses”, “presuppositions” or the like.

The term “manifest” content, which was used by the founding fathers of content analysis is, as noted, systematically ambiguous, since what is manifest to one might be quite concealed to others, depending on the context of reading. Moreover, the manifest expressions used in one context might delineate a kind of level of tolerance for other expressions, thus also setting boundaries to what is called below “the space of opinion”. Opinions might, as it were, be within the reach of a particular discourse, or terminology, while other opinions might be out of reach, and also therefore regularly not included in a particular space of opinions at a given time. At present terms associating to political violence by extremist groups are centred around the discourse...
of “terrorism”. Terrorism might be defined in a number of ways, and has, e.g. in Great Britain been a daily subject of political discussion since the partition of Ireland after the First World War. Obviously, the space of opinion has moved considerably from a more positive attitude to liberation movements in the 1970s to the “War on terrorism” proclaimed after the attack in Wall Street, New York in 2001.

Now, to discuss the wider notion of content of a space of opinion is much more complicated than to discuss individual expressions of political views in media products, such as articles, newscasts etc. Still, this larger notion of content – as a “way of thinking” – might be more important than individual expressions. Terms like “cultural climate”, trend or fashion are intended to capture this phenomenon – a phenomenon which, just as individual products like newspaper articles, books, or broadcast programmes, might be said to have a specific content, different from other contents.

The more abstract disputes about “opinion space” goes right into the politically central controversy on “compensatory phenomena”, analysed more in detail below. Along with most other observers of media and political developments, I have noted a change in the content of media, taken as a space, in perhaps the whole world, in the two last decades. It could be described, crudely, as a shift from left to right, from equality to economic growth and acceptance of growing gaps, and, perhaps, from critical debate to entertainment etc. The question is how to articulate this vague assessment, examining media products that confirm or disconfirm the tendencies described. This “articulation” is equivalent to the idea of content analysis in a broad sense – including not only “manifest” expressions but also underlying perspectives or layers, vocabularies chosen, angles etc. Analysis – also of Berelson’s seemingly neutral kind – is finally a question of someone addressing a number of questions to a material, e.g. by singling out some aspects on the “surface” manifestations in texts, programmes etc. judged as significant, and comparing either a statistically sufficiently large amount of instances or exemplary observations.

The kind of approaches to social and textual analysis labelled ‘qualitative’ - subject to frequent disputes among social scientists - mostly presuppose examples or case studies, which are asserted to secure validity as much as, or better than, statistical material. Disciplines as history, are, as pointed out by Dilthey and other theorists long ago, different from statistically based approaches in social science in this respect, found their observations on singular texts, which are compared with other sources to render some kind of coherent unity. The central notion for this unity is “meaning” or “sense”, that is, the key word for micro-sociological approaches, following Alfred Schütz (1932). Journalism is close to history in this respect, not pretending to be a scholarly endeavour but still pretending to tell true stories about the world.

A case study of media pluralism, taking into account also the “space of opinion”, or to use a somewhat banal metaphor, several dimensions of the cultural products, might for example look at newspapers distributed in a limited geographical area, to a business group, to a media company, after a change of ownership, or some other structural transformation. The technique used in these cases might be to address a certain (small) number of questions to a restricted group of persons and let them talk rather freely. Comparability may be secured by using the same questions. The notion of example presupposes some kind of representativity between the case chosen and a major trend or large-scale phenomenon. This is not always possible to confirm, and therefore some features might be selected for examination by statistical methods. Nevertheless, the exemplary nature of a case is often put forward as a matter of intuitive or direct knowledge. It might be, in this respect, analogous to the relation of causality, mostly assumed to certain, but never (as the philosopher David Hume demonstrated) possible to directly observe. The same goes for “inductive conclusions” in science. Normally, additional assumptions (such as the existence of a natural law) are required to establish a formal logical connection between the incidence of an event and the generalisation in question.

Case studies of media expressions of political views are, in as far as they presuppose longer series of material, difficult to implement for other media products than texts and images, that is,
mostly books, newspapers and magazines. For broadcasting and film, a historical overview is more cumbersome, since the researcher mostly depends on non-public material owned by corporations.

In addition to case studies methods such as assessing the reactions of the audience or readership might be employed, instead of trying, from some vantage point of a researcher, to analyse the material. This would imply asking a representative selection of the audience about their views as to the entire spectrum of values. Examples of questions, addressing the issue of changes in the “opinion space” rather than singular views expressed in media products, might be the following:

- Do feel that the entire media spectrum today is closer to your own opinions than 20 years ago?
- Did your own opinions change substantially?
- Do you read/listen to media that correspond to your own opinions today, or are they more distant than they used to be?
- Do you feel that some of the media that were close to your opinions have disappeared or been weakened?

Another method is to ask standardised questions to actors in the media (journalists, owners, editors, political organisations behind the media etc.) and allow for more complete answers, not aiming at reducing these answers to standardised or scaled quantities.

Actually, such questions, though crude and tentative, might clarify the difficulty in approaching the subject of the politics of diversity (pluralism) in cultural production. The classical, “Cartesian”, method of beginning by smaller parts and ascending to more amalgamated wholes might be difficult to practice, at least as the sole or major method. Instead “functional” or “ecological” approaches might be more rewarding in examining the spaces under scrutiny.

**Diversity ? Pluralism?**

This feature of the media landscape or space of opinion might not be one single or clearly discernible property at all – although it is taken for granted that that its position at the conceptual centre of political debates is justified. The terminological controversies and *glissandi* between diverse terms, semantic associations and political implementations might indicate the contrary. The oscillation in many languages between diverse crucial terms, such as ‘diversity’ and ‘pluralism’, points to a fundamental shakiness. Let us try to examine one example of this oscillation.

In Denis McQuail’s *Media Performance, Mass Communication and the Public Interest* it is suggested that media could contribute to pluralism in basically three ways, fulfilling the following roles:

1) reflecting existing pluralism and diversities, or differences in society,
2) offering space to diverse opinions in society,
3) offering to the audience (general public, users) a diverse supply.

Applying the more holistic perspective of cultural production this distribution of roles will be relevant to study not only for mass media in the narrow sense (radio, TV, press, books…) but also applicable, or not applicable, to other kinds of cultural production – media, art, scientific research, justice and norms.

McQuail’s three key-words, viz. pluralism, diversities, differences merit a closer study. These terms evoke, it seems however unintentionally, three structures, which are essential to distinguish in the analysis of cultural politics, and media policies:

1) the structure of society (social structure),
2) the structure of discourse on society, and (discursive structure)
3) the structure of the cultural production, n. b. media texts on society (product structure or text structure).

The separation of these three levels of analysis is disputed in diverse theories but we might keep them apart initially.
‘Difference’, ‘diversity’ and ‘pluralism’ have specific roles and connotations at all these three levels. The relation between these notions is rather fluid, vaguely it seems that, in the English language, the level of generality is decreasing from Difference to Pluralism. Moreover, the complex interplay between them involves political intentions and strategies, based on suggestive descriptions of facts and levels of understanding in general, which, to a high degree, therefore predetermine the outcome of political processes.

The first and the third of the roles cited by McQuail might at first sight be difficult to separate, since offering a diverse supply might be assumed to include a reflection of diverse interests etc. in society. But, at a second look, the distinction emerges as well motivated and actually depicts quite a common situation: cultural production might be very varied and contain diverse products – without being “representative”, in the sense of sufficiently reflecting interests, groups or opinions in society.

I have elsewhere\(^{268}\) proposed “the Soviet criterion of pluralism” as a model for assessing a situation where an absence of pluralism is compatible with a situation where media products are diverse, and even also to some extent “reflect” some diversities in society, though not in any relevant sense representing diverse opinions or offering a supply of expressions of different opinions. Instead, the media and other forms of cultural production represented a minority view in politics, ideology etc., viz. that of the ruling party nomenklatura (or other dominant group or class). The existing media diversity reflected other diversities, for example of a cultural, professional or regional nature…

The triple roles of media thus primarily should therefore be taken to concern not a very broad phenomenon named diversity, but a more specific phenomenon, better named pluralism, which is a term also mentioned by McQuail. A failure to distinguish between these terms tends to obscure the essential problem of the political role of cultural production in a democratic society.

Trivially, mass media, and cultural production as a whole, play roles in a wider social context. One of these roles is – as McQuail and numerous others point out – often labelled a “reflecting” role. This metaphor should not be taken too literally: there is intervention between the social phenomenon “reflected” and the “reflection” or “image” presented in the cultural product, someone produces\(^{269}\) the image, the story, the text. There is no automatic process, similar to the physical process of light being, literally, reflected by a mirror. The underlying pretension of the metaphor is however clear: mirroring is incontestable, truthful, exact and adequate.

Each singular product, in the mass media or in other fields of cultural production, is not required to reflect social diversity, or pluralism, or differences, but this is taken to be a matter of the entire spectrum or landscape of cultural products – the “media landscape” is a collective of media products.

Obviously nothing prevents one particular product of being pluralistic or “diverse” in itself – “internal pluralism” is often given as an argument for accepting market concentration ending in monopolistic structures. But the essential matter is obviously a diversity or pluralism of an entire area or market. In other terms: the “subjective”\(^{270}\) different media products might (and do, actually) by their existence and participation in social debates constitute parts of a structure that, taken together, might deserve the name of pluralism, sometimes better than a structure which contains several “objective” or mainstream media, but few deviant products. The problem of individual media products is not – in a pluralistic market – lack of neutrality or pluralism of opinions. Even the contrary might be suggested: it is essential to have a landscape of media products, each advocating one different, albeit sometimes one-sided, or even provocatively “subjective” point of view. This aspect complicates a discussion of the “quality” in some objective sense of cultural products.

\(^{268}\) Cavallin 1998. Definitions of pluralism are also presented in the unpublished working documents of the Council of Europe.

\(^{269}\) This productive feature of reflection is much stronger in other uses of the term, such as in “I reflected upon the existence of God”.

\(^{270}\) As noted by e.g. Edwin Baker in Baker 1994.
In the media this also raises a problem of the working conditions of people when ownership is changed. They may have a choice to stay, subscribing to the editorial policy of the medium, or leave, honouring their professional codes or personal liberty. A “paradox of professionalisation of media production” emerges. In a situation where market evolution dictate employment and working conditions, and compromises have to be made, professional codes may protect pluralism. But professional traditions and discourses, such as those learnt in journalism schools or picked up from older colleagues, or just “sit in the walls of the institution”, may be instrumental towards conformity of media products and marginalisation of politically or ideologically deviant views, that is, against the interest of pluralism.

**Pluralism** is mostly regarded as a phenomenon of society at large, and thus not defined for one or other part of the cultural production area, for example the mass communication sector. This also seems to be the way in which McQuail regards the concept. The media, the arts or scientific research **contribute** to pluralism, by offering certain kinds of diversity of supply. ‘Pluralism’ is therefore a notion, which is not coextensive or equivalent with diversity – it should be a more specific notion. Diversity might exist without pluralism, but pluralism could not exist without diversity. In Communist Europe, and still in most undemocratic - and also probably many democratic – states diversity is tolerated but not pluralism of opinions (content expressed). Pluralism does not, however, only pertain to contents of cultural products since it defines entire social structures; pluralism in the wider, social, sense **presupposes** pluralism of contents in cultural production.

A society therefore is – more or less - pluralistic if differences and diversities, of various kinds, ethnic, regional, religious, philosophical, cultural, linguistic, social etc. **coexist**, in some basic degree. Pluralism is, however, not necessarily equivalent with socially just or democratic. Societies, and states, differ in this respect: some democratic states are less pluralistic but still democratic, for example Denmark, Norway and Sweden were, until the last decades, monolithic societies, and thus not very pluralistic, and yet upholding democratic institutions. Other states, on the other hand, would hardly be recognized as democratic, while still being pluralistic societies. Pluralism is linked to cultural forms of expression (clothing, religion, language, customs of various kinds) coexisting, as well as political differences of opinion, ideology etc. As pluralistic societies might qualify, for example, Switzerland, India, Russia, Kenya and the US. At least for some of these states some people would dispute their democratic nature, entirely or in essential respects.

Chantal Mouffe – author of a classical work on discourse analysis together with Ernesto Laclau has described this distinction between pluralism and diversity\(^{271}\) as follows. In a pluralistic society, **mutually irreconcilable views**, attitudes and practices tied to divergent social groups, are represented, and catered for in social institutions, political systems - and cultural production. This implies that there is no such thing as the “American way of life” or “our Swedish values” – people just act and think differently, in America or Sweden, or Denmark. The real test of democracy is the capacity of a society to find ways of dealing with divergences and controversies, conflicts and oppositions, and to open up for different interest groups to let their voices be heard and their concerns not be ignored. Pluralism is, in this understanding, a “multitude of subjectivities”, not an attempt at “integrating into objectivity”.

Media pluralism might be understood as “integration of segregation”: there should be no authority or power, which could decide upon the “quality” or “objectivity” or “relevance” of expressions in the media. The divergences of cultural identities should instead be accepted and not subject to ambitions of forming ingredients in a “melting pot”.

This understanding of media pluralism might sound as a libertarian dream or extreme “communitarism” – leading to anarchy – but it is, in the context of media, a rather traditional attitude, actually. In society as a whole, it might be a more difficult matter to establish in actual practice – Switzerland is sometimes cited as a country, where local, linguistic and other kinds of

---

\(^{271}\) - in an interview given to the Swedish cultural magazine *Arena* in October 2005
differences are set into a viable institutional framework. The snag is a conservatism, which pervades most of the daily life of its citizens – and depriving essential parts of its population (earlier: women, now: immigrants) ordinary citizen’s rights.

Assessing pluralism is important to a number of interests:

- To politicians, who try to evaluate the effect and quality of their own (or that of their opponents) media policies and to find new arguments for further decisions or projects.
- To owners of media companies as arguments against intervention in the market, such as ownership restrictions, or various subsidies that do not favour their competitive positions, or, in general, distort competition. Mostly media enterprises tend to include diversity as a kind of quality asset. Often publicity tends to emphasise diversity of a media product as “offering something to everyone”. This does not apply to specialised products in the same degree, but even there surprisingly often.
- To citizens and voters, who are expected to (and want to) form their own opinions both in relation to the general “space of opinions” as compared to their own views, and the occurrence of a sufficient number of expressed political alternatives (actual and potential).

It seems reasonable to stipulate that pluralism should not be ascribed to non-democratic states. If a society is not a genuine democracy, it does not tolerate diversity of opinions to be expressed. “Pluralism” has a connotation of ‘acceptance of differences’. Accepting this necessary condition of pluralism does not mean that it is a sufficient condition: all democratic states are not pluralist. France is a society in which centralist traditions and nationalist (earlier: imperialist) rhetoric dominate and differences (ethnic, linguistic, religious) are played down, thus indicating a kind of reserve towards pluralism. On the other hand, the policy of playing down, even to the extent of prohibiting – as in the controversy of wearing “ostentatious” religious symbols (a veil, burka or “kippa”) in school - was precisely motivated from the point of view of pluralism, being based, in France as in the USA, on a separation between state and religion, for the benefit of tolerance and co-existence of diverse groups in one united nation. This is why “laicité” – in this case a refusal to accept a pluralism of religious expressions - is regarded as a pillar of French democracy. The opposite position is taken by states, where Protestantism has dominated and the principle of “cuius regio eius religio” persisted, such as Scandinavia, England and Scotland. Even after the establishment of democracy, State churches persisted and still exist....

In clear-cut cases of anti-pluralism, authoritarian or nationalist regimes impose the language, customs and general domination of one group on the entire society. Border-line cases abound, for historical or other reasons: in Latvia the big Russian minority (for long a majority in the capital city) is rather pressed, in Estonia similarly – in Finland, on the other side of the Baltic, the Swedish-speaking minority (6%) is granted extensive rights. In Sweden only slowly linguistic rights of the Finnish-speaking minorities (about 300 000), and the other officially recognized linguistic minorities have been recognized. The languages of the numerous immigrant groups have a right to interpreters in some essential judicial contexts but no official status.

Pluralism could, finally, however also be a qualification ascribed to cultural production social subsystems, among those the media. It should in this case be considered a phenomenon secondary to the surrounding social structure – perhaps in the three ways cited by McQuail. It contributes to pluralism of society at large, by “reflecting” it, but it is also distinct from the diversity of the media, viz. by specifying certain respects in which diversity of a media product or a media structure also constitutes pluralism. Those respects will primarily involve political views and opinions, in a wide sense also incorporating ideological or philosophical divergences.

---

272 In particular public service broadcasters and dominant daily newspapers.
273 This attitude is supported by some research, for example some of the contributions to the Conference on measuring media content quality and diversity in Turku 2000. See Picard 2000.
274 The king decides about the religion of the people – a principle basically laid down in Europe in the 17th C.
The use of the term ‘diversity’ in the context of media and cultural policy is thus problematic, because of its lack of specificity. One way of making the distinction between diversity and pluralism might be by using a “Soviet criterion of pluralism”\(^{275}\) as follows.

The Soviet Union housed a very rich flora (or should we say ‘fauna’?) of mass media, newspapers, TV and radio channels, magazines etc., not to speak of other cultural products, supported, financed and promoted by the State. These products were, no doubt, very differentiated, and not the least uniform in content in the sense of producing and repeating the same kinds of information etc. There were newspapers and other products for all kinds of places, people and regions, interests, professions, tastes, ages etc. The Soviet television was certainly very diverse, in terms of different kinds of programmes presented, regions and cultures reflected etc. There was, in brief, a great variety and diversity. But this diversity did not in any sense match or reflect the political, cultural, ideological, religious, philosophical etc. values existing, in the world, in Russia or the other parts of the Union - precisely because of the massive repression of opposition. The diversity was thus very rich but entirely unrepresentative from this select, but decisive, point of judgement. Diversity: yes, but pluralism: no, neither in society, nor in the structures of cultural production.

This historical truth might serve as a test for the distinction between the wider concept of diversity and the narrower one of pluralism.

To reverse the perspective: dictatorship and repression is, as Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman and Robert McChesney, together with a whole school of US media scholars, have urged, not a necessary criterion, though perhaps a sufficient one, for the lack of pluralism. Also other forms of government, such as formal democracy or constitutional rule, and of social or market organisation, might exclude pluralism. This is where a more sophisticated view of power, and of cultural and social capital, in Bourdieu’s understanding, becomes relevant, since the sheer dominance of one economic or political group over cultural production structure might prevent the “reflection” of a pluralist society into in cultural production. “Reflection” is, also in this respect, far from any automatic process. The intermediary apparatus between pluralistic social structures and pluralism in the cultural production is an apparatus of selection, transformation and structuration, in conformity with or dependent on the controllers of this apparatus. The next to mythological explanatory figure of “information flow” from the “input” to the “output”, stimulated by the engineering calculus of Shannon and Weaver, has very little to do with the actual structure of communication.

The complex relations between the relevant concepts motivated finally why I, and so far also the international political bodies dealing with this subject, tended to prefer the term pluralism to ‘diversity’ in this more specific political context. In other, somewhat overlapping, contexts of cultural production this terminology is by far no uniform tendency – the prime example to the contrary is the World Commission of Culture which gave the title Our Creative Diversity to its final report. The scope of the report was much wider than media only, and perhaps also involved a tendency to avoid controversial issues like media concentration etc. Unesco’s recently (2005) adopted convention of cultural diversity – focussing matters of linguistic and cultural pluralism rather than political – could perhaps be interpreted as a shift of attention. Yet diversity in these aspects of cultural production is also highly politically sensitive – Unesco’s convention is strongly promoted by the resistance, notably from representatives of the “Francophonie”, to the increased dominance of the English language in different arenas, material, as well as cultural.

Pluralism is, finally, perhaps best defined as a particular species of diversity, namely the co-existence and tolerated diversity within the political, religious, cultural, ideological and related spheres of society. The fundamental property of pluralism is the independence of different groups, and views expressed by groups (persons etc.) in society. In this sense pluralism has, of course, a lot in common with the traditional aspirations of liberalism, as expressed by its classics from the 19\(^{th}\) C or recent, also classical, theorists such as John Rawls.

\(^{275}\) Cavallin 1998.
Diversity retained? ...

The unspecified use of the notion of diversity might, in the worst examples, serve rather bizarre purposes, viz. to promote the kind of multi-monologue which is characteristic of strong political divisions in a society. To illustrate this from the public debate on media concentration, a series of measurements prepared by a researcher for the Swedish state-owned public television was proudly presented as demonstrating a high degree of diversity within the programme supply of this company. Actually the basis of this pretention was not “content” in any significant sense, such as those discussed above, but the proportion of a selected number of ‘genres’ of television programmes to the total amount of programs transmitted. The results of an inquiry, using the same kind of measurements, might have given quite good results for the Soviet television as well. Obviously, the contribution of educational, children, newscast, or sports channels to pluralism would have been nil, simply because the assessment concerned just one media product, or channel.

This does not mean that, as noted, it is uninteresting to find diversity of genres in a single media or cultural product – notably, if that product is not designed for special interests. In particular, it is a virtue for media products distributed on a monopolistic basis on a particular market, such as was the case for the public broadcasting channels in Europe, or large private, next to monopolistic, regional newspapers, to include different, specified, genres or kinds of material. Traditional value scales require that news and public affairs, arts and education, at the top and entertainment, popular music and quiz programmes and gossip or even pornography at a low part of the scale should be included in such a monopolistic supply. This is also normally expressed in the remits of European public broadcasting channels. But this is a very little part of the concern in the public debates on media concentration – and, with the exception of pornography and some part of gossip, few of these genres were unavailable to the Soviet citizen. And, regarding the case from the point of view of cultural production in general, this “internal” diversity may in itself be a shortcoming as much a virtue. A particular newspaper, just as a book or a television programme, does not necessarily have to deal with everything, on the contrary, concentration is normally a virtue, for the individual media product. It would be absurd to suggest that a book should contain all diverse points of view, pluralism in cultural production concerns a totality.

Looking from the point of view of the political role of cultural production in a democratic society, as the central concern, the decisive difference in a media structure may be expressed precisely as taking the step from diversity in general to pluralism.

In other words, unless you specify the kinds or aspects of diversity discussed, the use of the term in political contexts may lead to dead ends. This does not exclude that ‘diversity’ might serve important political purposes, as well, as in the cited Unesco convention, precisely because the vagueness of the term facilitates agreements. Although many might say that most of the same problems pertain to ‘pluralism’, it seems to be a more useful concept and easier to associate to plurality (or, for that sake, diversity) of views, opinions, attitudes of a political, religious, ethical nature than genres, styles, fashions etc. of expression. Terminological divergences should however not be allowed to obscure the hard political realities: the Soviet kind of diversity in cultural production had nothing to do with pluralism in the politically relevant sense. And the opposite is also true: pluralism requires a multitude of mutually independent producers in the “Reign of Mind”. The political defences of monopolies, private or public, in cultural production to exploit the sliding connotations of the terms is standard in order to escape from criticism. Actually Soviet propaganda did not sound very different from what is being put forward by large media conglomerates today.

Pluralism is sometimes, just as diversity, classified as a “value” and ranged aside with other values being judged as essential for public life, or, specifically, cultural production. Also discussions of media concentration sometimes assume this perspective – diversity being taken among
one of several “quality aspects” of a media product276, or a media landscape. This seemingly innocuous classification may, however, be a major trap in the public debate, primarily because it opens up for a discussion on other qualities of the cultural products as compensating for the lack of pluralism or diversity. This brings us, essentially, back to the criteria of “diversity” advanced by advocates of the totalitarian (or “mobilisation”) view of cultural pluralism – viz. they fall victim to the “Soviet test” suggested above.

It is, as in most of these contexts, rather tricky to describe how this semantic or conceptual circumstance influence political action, but I will venture a try.

The term “value” in itself has associations to economic contexts, and may therefore be included in considerations relevant for business development in the cultural sector. The extension of the terminology of value beyond its mathematical uses in the theory of functions278, from economic discourse to other contexts, whether philosophical, political, cultural or social, became common in the late 19th century279.

One common feature to all values is the reference to scales, viz. the minimum and maximum of an ordered set. In human contexts reference is normally given to human acts based on preferences, or perhaps when assignments of values from a scale are discussed. Scales and assignments of value might also occur in quite ordinary perceptual situations - indeed the old philosophical term “judgement” (Urteil) for all propositions marks the wide scope of significance of this term. Often, however, particularly in “emotivist” ethical theory, discourse is bifurcated into “value discourse” and “cognitive discourse”, the latter often being qualified as “rational” by its very lack of relevance for the promotion of, for example, morally good or evil280. This kind of bifurcation, having roots in Kant’s discrimination between the “pure” and the “practical” reason, in its more radical variants tends to eliminate most problems that require a basis of a philosophical, ethical or political discussion and positions from “scientific” (=rational, “theoretical”) research and discourse281.

In including diversity or pluralism in a wider set of values, labelled ‘quality’, pluralism may also, considering the frequent and colloquial use of the discourse of value, be subsumed under a category of values associated to values in an economically quantifiable sense. The scales of value are, most naturally, described in numerical terms. The step from the discussion of democratic rule of society to the profit of business companies is actually not as far as it might seem to be; using the polysemic properties of the terms of “value” was not alien to the classical authors of liberal political theory. The view of democracy as a market where the voter (consumer) has a choice from the supply of diverse competitive political ideologies and alternatives is still a rather familiar from political rhetoric, although this domain of metaphors is today frequently replaced by sports terminology.

Economic value has the advantage over several other values in social contexts in being easy to measure, due to the existence of currency or liquidity, which is a very practical device accepted for exchange purposes. No such accepted currency is easily at hand in other fields of human life, although studies of “gift economy”282 indicate a lot of relations in other “liquidities” or valuables than cash or in goods. A generalised theory of exchange of “valuables” might be centred around the Greek term “axiology” chosen by Rickert to denote a general theory of values, with its etymology indicating scales of dignity, rather than economic wealth. The obvious choice of terms,

277 Ibid.
278 Ascribed to Leibniz 1692 and Bernoulli, Euler and others in the 18th C.
279 The German Neo-Kantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert, the teacher of Ernst Cassirer, is referred to as having systematically elaborated a general theory of values “axiology” this kind of “economisation” of ethics, aesthetics etc. Universalism: Axiologie
280 this position is common to emotivistic ethics – a special Swedish tradition is the Uppsala school of thought that denies altogether “theoretical” status to “value judgements” in normative ethics, political, aesthetic and religious discourse.
281 One of the most radical advocates of this bifurcation was the Swedish philosopher Axel Hägerström, whose positions on this subject have been carefully analysed and criticized by Ernst Cassirer (Cassirer 2005)
282 Mauss 1997/1925
after Bourdieu’s\textsuperscript{283} generalisation of the term ‘capital’, close to synonymous with ‘value’ may be ‘cultural (social) capital’.

Still, some general reserves could be aired for the value language: what is common to beauty, virtue, goodness, efficiency, ugliness, evil, tolerance, freedom, slavery? The domains of comparison might not always be overlapping – thus certain moderation with respect to ‘commensurability’ of value systems is advisable.

As a whole, pluralism is, I propose, neither comparable to values in an economic context, nor appropriately classified as a sub-category of “quality” of cultural products. The reason has been stated repeatedly: according to the “Soviet criterion” of pluralism one risks to blur the demarcation line between a democratic, liberal, system of cultural production and other structures, where both very high-ranking and diverse products are promoted and tolerated – without in any sense being expressions of pluralism in the relevant sense. Pluralism should not, be, therefore, be put on the same level as neither other categories of diversity nor other qualitative assets of cultural products. Basically, pluralism is good for a democratic human society. From this follows that other aspects of pluralism, such as geographical, linguistic, artistic, etc. should be regarded as subordinate to the main aspect of political (ethical, ideological, philosophical etc.) pluralism.

Notwithstanding the reserves as to the amalgamation of the notions of pluralism and diversity above, the three-fold function of the cultural products in regard of pluralism indicated by McQuail might be upheld, that is, reflection, offer of space and supply respectively.

One further distinction is frequently brought up for the specific contribution of the media – the products of interest to McQuail - in this field, viz. the two ways of implementing pluralism as 1) an “external” fashion by diverse and independent products and actors, or 2) by “internal” pluralism, giving room for divergent views in one and the same media product (channel, newspaper, site) or organisation. This distinction is frequently evoked in discussions, and may, in political contexts, cover positions really reflecting power or economic interests. One trivial, but significant, complexity of the debate is that ‘the media’ is a term which is imbued with ambiguity. The term might refer to mass-media, such as press and broadcasting, to “cultural media”, such as books, films and recorded music, to diverse Internet-based forms of distribution and production, as well as interpersonal communication by the Web, telephones and old-fashioned written letters on paper, and last but not least all kinds of advertising or marketing devices, using some of the previously mentioned categories of communication or other.

Measure

The talk about scales and values is intimately related to the ideas of measure. This brings us back, again, to antiquity, as often to the beginnings of systematic rationality in Aristotle. The above relationship between “value” and “dignity” also resurges, in an interesting and instructive way. Greek ‘mesos’ (μέσος), “the middle” is the central notion of ethics and of aesthetics in Aristotle\textsuperscript{284}, but the use is another than a conventionally quantitative, though the reference to a scale is there; Aristotle also explicitly discusses the relativity of scales. Being moderate, or in the middle-road, is, in this tradition, which continues long in Hellenistic tradition, more or less equal to being morally good, or being beautiful. A central (literally, not the Highest!) position in a scale is thus occupied rather by promoting the equilibrium, of two weights. The “highest” end of the scale is not “at the top” but in the “middle”. Being rich is all right, but overspending and being mean are two bad ends of the scale – and expressions of “vulgarity” (“apeirokalía”, the incapacity to assess beauty). The same applies in rhetoric and poetics. A hill or a curve with an apex rather than a scale (a ladder) may be the best metaphor for depicting these systems of assessment. This kind of judgement – the conventional term for the state of mind corresponding to the value systems was

\textsuperscript{283} Or, rather, as mentioned, Stig Dagerman’s… Dagerman 2001.

\textsuperscript{284} Nicomachean ethics (Ed Bywater, London 1890) Book II.7 1107 b 19 on tastelessness and vulgarity, “apeirokalía kai banausía”, as the “overmeasure” (“hyperboli”) as being one of two bad extremes in relation to the golden middle (mesotēs). A more differentiated presentation is given in 1122a 20-9 and b 10-18. The Rhetoric and Poetics contain similar statements.
"sofrosynē" σοφροσύνη – may be hard to integrate into the conventions of associating to measures an attribution of a numerical value to a manifold. In such assessments the largest number is taken for the highest (best) value: maximisation is the norm, not moderation, whether of profits, efficiency, productivity, etc.285

This understanding of measurement might thus be regarded as an alternative to more primitive or original understandings of measurement, just as an economy involving liquidity of payments might be a development, but not the only thinkable form, of exchanges. In everyday life we often do not need any more exact comparison than a simple kind of identification/distinction (it is a digital or binary situation!) in order to measure an object quite satisfactorily. Generally speaking, the purpose of measurement determines the scale (or other kind of domain of value of the measuring function), as well as the detail and the kind of expressions used for the particular measurement. Sometimes the numerical or mathematical quantification of measures conceals the circumstance that measuring is dependent on the intentions or purpose of those who measure, albeit neutral or comparable scales are always sought for.

So when someone asks me to measure pluralism (diversity) of content in the media and other forms of cultural production, I should inquire about the presumed purpose “behind” the question.

Numerical measurements have the unique advantage of being easily representable, and moreover computable, being included in the universal system of the language of mathematics. But the numerical measures normally have to take assistance from graphical illustrations, such as diagrams or maps, being representable and, usually, more concentrated, though also ultimately translatable in numerical terms.287 The limits of exactitude of measurement are also expressed in mathematical theories, as shown in designing pictures (such as maps): the amount of pixels is restricted. We also know about the “infinite” length of a coastal line from a fractal point of view.

Are we to measure every bend around every sand grain in order to assess the “right” or exact length of the coastline? No, of course we have to “jump” between the grains, drawing a curve or a line.

A high degree of non-numerical measurement is demonstrated by earlier architecture. I am told that the cathedral of Milan288 was basically constructed by architects who used very little calculation but very much other kinds of measurements.

Measurement is also, as illustrated (!) by the notion of maps, possible to do by depiction, making images, pictures. Not only numerical diagrams but all kinds of pictures “give you an idea” of relations. Measurement is, ultimately, but one kind of telling others what you think of a particular object or structure or field of observation. Everyone knows, at least in our present context, how to tell lies by measuring or using measures of a numerically ordered nature - statistics is a classical method to tell both truths and lies. Truth does not lie in the method of measurement or way of telling.289

Measure also means, by metonymy, precise or calculated (measured) stepp290 in a process of action. In measuring we are preparing “measures” to be taken in order to change reality.

285 Obviously, the idea of competition as such was far from alien to the founders of the Olympic games!...

286 A note of caution: in modern proof-theory and intuitionistic logic, binarism or bifurcation' between true and false is not taken for granted. You have to offer some kind of 'method of verification' in order to operate with a simple bifurcation. Cf. authors like Martin-Löf, Prawitz and others.

287 since numbers are, ultimately representable in what might be described as, basically, non-numerical mathematics (it is really Hegelian 'digital' logic: 'yes' or 'no', well someone might say: back to equilibrium or non-equilibrium?). At any rate human memory is represented much earlier by pictures – or art - than figures or texts, since the first pictures might be up to 30 000 years old.

288 Academic celebration lecture in Stockholm by art historian Bo Grandien September 1990.

289 To be etymological: the English 'tell' has the same root as the German and Swedish 'Zahl'/’tal' ('number'). A 'teller' is somebody who counts or somebody who tells. 'Tala' in Swedish is 'speak' or, naturally, 'talk', just as a 'tale' is something told.

290 Meter' is the name of a unit of length but also the particular variety of rhythm in poetry. Something comes back, and the parts of the verse share some property.
The notion of measurement emerges as the central notion in any kind of process associated to what sociologists call ‘modernity’, characterised by operating according to rational explicit principles, instead of unformulated traditions. Only by calculating, measuring and thereby predicting, was, for example, capitalism able to develop – on a private or on a state level.

But, also the systematic management (handling) of public affairs is dependent on measuring – this is a phenomenon well-known since the beginning of history (in ancient Babylonia, China, India, Persia and Egypt, and thus not very “modern” at all). A “planned economy” on a public level is (or perhaps rather: was) obviously even more confident in the scope and power of measuring, calculation and rational prediction. The confidence in numerical measuring accompanies organised public life (“policy”). Indeed, it may to some extent be identical to it.

Now, to approach the subject of our study, cultural production: how do we measure pluralism, or diversity in the specific sense used here, that is diversity of opinions or even of the “opinion space”? How are we, for example, to, if at all, develop a “topology of opinion space”? This question might be compared to similar questions, addressed in other scholarly contexts involving the design of systems of measuring variety, and mapping them. The question actually involves immensely difficult theoretical problems, perhaps most clearly present to biologists trying to classify living organisms, accounting for their differences in a significant way. Taxonomy was a concern, for Aristotle, Linne and Darwin alike, along with scholars in philology, linguistics. As well as customs authorities and librarians…

So the plea in public policy for diversity measures, among other things for the diversity or pluralism in the media (or other fields), has roots in the beginning of history: policy is dependent on measure. The issue of measuring pluralism in the media is the focus of the most ambitious recent scholarly initiative, viz. the project of the European Commission commissioned to a consortium of researchers to single out criteria for media diversity, to be published shortly (2009).

Actually, ‘measures’ is emblematic in the most detailed document so far adopted in the field of media concentration on the international level, viz. the Recommendation adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe January 19, 1999 (R(99)1) on measures to promote pluralism in the media. The “measure” in this, obviously different, sense is more or less synonymous with an action, planned and taken.

Measures and units

Every measure presupposes some kind of unit, both of the objects measured and the system of measurements – a “meter”. Diversity is gauged by comparing the units measured to a domain selected.

In the mass media sector, such units may be the number of titles of newspapers, editorial units, (independent) companies, owners (individual or groups), as well as political (ideological, philosophical, religious, ethnic, cultural etc.) views presented, linguistic varieties or geographic areas represented. These are all possible to record, compare and compute. If these units, representing views of a certain diversity, are sufficiently many in a given area of comparison, in the media as well as in other cultural production spheres – this constitutes what is commonly referred to as “external” pluralism. Despite the difficulties, related to the idea of content analysis recorded above, a classification of production units, texts, programmes and sites compared to views of various kinds along these variables is feasible – though labour-consuming. It is a question of building up, step by step, categories, variables and other factors, into a system or a body of interrelated documentation. There are methods and techniques worked out for a number of variables, in different countries and for some markets. Research institutions are world-wide familiar with, so far the rather modest, results, and shortcomings. I would be surprised if the world-
wide academic community could not develop further some kind of network to stabilize this situation.

Going from a system of accounting for parts (units) in a scientific domain of research as sketched above, to measuring diversity, or differentiation, for any kind of space (system) is more complex, but, as noted, is well-known in a number of, first of all biological, disciplines. “Ecology” is all about gaugeing relationships in a “house” (“oikos”), or a space delimited in a specific way, among other things by assessing the diversity of species in the space. National conservation or ecological authorities are developing, or already on a full scale, methods of assessing diversity of species in diverse locales, larger or smaller environments. It is rather easy to imagine that ecological principles may be fruitful to apply for the cultural production field, notably in as far as pluralism is under discussion. Despite the complexities linked to “internal” and “external” pluralism of content and the general cultural “climate shifts” this kind of measurement is feasible also on the level of social life. Again, Pierre Bourdieu has launched in his cultural sociology a set of instruments to gauge social and cultural capital accumulation and change, as a basis for the depiction of social stratification and diversity in maps of social spaces.

Quality

Relations between pluralism and notions of quality of the media landscape have already been touched upon.

Quality and quantity are, in analyses of cultural policies, often opposed to each other – despite the fact that both concepts often are seen as dialectical or mutually dependent. In social science, qualitative approaches are, for example, contrasted with statistical studies. Quality is often referred to as “value”-related, in distinction to the “hard-core” quantitative dimension. As indicated, positions on media power structures sometimes say that a low quantity of titles, editorial units etc. might be “compensated” by a high quality of the products, including “internal”- pluralist aspects. Pluralism being a “quantitative” notion - ‘plurals’ means ‘many’ – is thus subrepticiously subsumed under quality.

A precise distinction between these two notions is a rather tricky – and value-laden! - business. Social science manuals of quality-related methods abound.

Still, conventional theory of language, rooted (where else?) in Aristotle, might offer a solution to these conflicts, simply by including both these “dimensions” in the doctrine of categories, that is, as ultimate (irreducible). In his logic (the Organon) Aristotle distinguishes between seven categories292, among those the “how” – πόσον, and the “how much” - ποσόν293. Though the idea of quantity is primarily associated to precise scales, and thus value, it is rather “qualitative” methods, such as deep interviews, ethnomoethodology, cultural theory etc., which are associated to “softer” or “value-laden” aspects of social life. But, obviously, also this understanding of quality implies high or a low positions on a scale of assessment.

Sometimes it is argued also that quality has to do with the “inner” characteristics (properties) of an object, compared to other objects, while quantity is related to sets of objects, that is more dealing with relations between objects. In medieval philosophical terminology “whatness” (quidditas), were sometimes proposed as synonyms to ‘essence’ or nature294. This terminology, however, excludes “negative” properties like absences or privations from being essences or natures.

Quality is mostly determined as an outcome of a measurement along a scale of assessment mostly situating the object measured on a higher end of the scale, and might be translated into quantity, if the scale is numerical.

‘Quality’ is, as these sketches of its conceptual complications shows, as much as ‘diversity’, in need of specification in order to be a useful concept in a social or political context. This is all

292 Aristotle 1996.
293 Categories, book VI deals with quantity and VIII quality.
294 Some of the relations between these concepts are developed in Aquinas’ De ente et essentia. Thomas ab Aquino 1959.
the more necessary since, in cultural policy, most typically in the narrow sense of arts policy, quality criteria are nearly without exception applied whenever any kind of public support is granted, and when rules for support are laid down in regulations, viz. explicit in formal language. Discussions of artistic quality are legio and typical examples of controversy, entailing hard-core economic consequences to applicants for public subventions or support. Sometimes innovation and tradition are being put in opposition to each other, in other cases artistic quality on one hand and appeal to large audiences, commercial potential on the other are often opposed to each other. This opposition is often in the middle of conflicts in cultural policy debates, as indicated above, but also in theorizing about cultural expressions and values. Artistic honesty is contrasted to banality, standardisation and mass-production, as in Adorno-Horkheimers classical criticism of the cultural industries. In the commercial sector, reversely, quality and some kind of popular appeal, in terms of better sales (="quantity"), are, by necessity, often associated. And so the classical dichotomy between “commercial” and “quality” is entrenched. “Liberal” theory of culture being associated to a positive evaluation of “commercial” (“quantity”), whereas both “conservative” and “socialist” currents of thought tend to be united in their negative attitudes to “commercialism”. On the other hand, “liberal” theorists of culture and cultural policies are, today, often classified as “neo-conservatives”.

Quality is ascribed to objects of assessment, material or immaterial (such as literary works), natural objects or artefacts. In the case of natural objects, normally a kind of purpose is (a stone is not “good” unless it serves a purpose, albeit only an aesthetical one) presupposed in a quality judgement, and also in the scale of assessment a purpose of measuring quality is taken for granted.

For quantity, a domain consisting of a set is presupposed, but this set is, as it were, more “objective” than a purpose (the objectivity is mostly a matter of dispute...).

If a politician, a minister for culture for example, proudly presents a bill as a measure (sic!) to promote “quality in television”, this is mostly interpreted as referring to a rather restricted spectrum of programme categories, and even, in itself, promoting a particular set of program genres, such as news, current affairs, art (= “culture” in a narrow sense) and documentaries. Ministers of culture rarely advocate an increase in support to budgets of entertainment or sports, notably in defending and defining the remit of what is generally termed “public service broadcasting”. This remit is delineating one notion of quality by way of deciding about the involvement of the state or other public bodies in broadcasting.

Nevertheless, advocates of state or public broadcasting mostly also defend its involvement in entertainment, where thus quality assessment is thus advocated also for “broader” programme segments. Some of the most popular program categories among viewers, such as pornography or screen violence, are rarely included in this kind of programming, neither in arguments for public service broadcasting or media involvement in general. They are, as it were automatically, excluded from quality discussions as such. For anyone who has listened to specialists of horror or splatter movies, the idea of media quality is severely shaken.

In cultural policy as a whole, quality is the neighbour of taste, that is, good taste. Relativistic criticism of public support systems to art generally involves a critique of the fluid and historically changing notion of taste – and the history of aesthetics (in the contemporary sense) from Aristotle over Boileau, Baumgarten... Kant, Schopenhauer and Dilthey up to Duchamps and others, does indeed offer a series of unstable and blatantly socially based concepts of taste, good taste and quality in cultural production. Some of the spheres of cultural production are more touched by this debate, some less. Bourdieu’s magistral work La distinction summarizes and transcends this
history. Legal formal written norms, regarded as cultural products, do not generally involve taste-related discussions, in contradistinction to moral norms and customs (such as eating habits, sexual practices, dress codes). Nevertheless lawyers might talk about a well-written and effective law etc. Scientific research production is, likewise, supposed to treat aspects of taste at the margin, but related concepts are frequently employed in grant committees, prize juries etc. when e.g. the account of a research result or a thesis is evaluated. And some scholarly disciplines come very close to, or intersect with, the arts – just to mention philosophy, history, literature etc. Neither arts grants committees and public support councils for research could avoid a classification along quality lines, frequently crossing the border-line to taste.

Generally speaking, to return to examples from the media production stage, state or public broadcasters tend to emphasise quality criteria as being rather distinct from the quantitative audience share criteria, which are, on the other hand, normally advanced by commercial broadcasters. This distinction is, however, not very consistently upheld, as demonstrated when public broadcasters strive to (nearly at any price) retain their audience share. The establishment of quality measurement is thus badly in need of specifications in order to be meaningful, a requirement well known by every teacher whose judgement is put into doubt by students’ objections…

Other requirements or criteria often involved in classifications of the quality of cultural production do not only have to do with artistic or cultural qualities in the more customary senses of “beauty” or the like, but confront rather distinct kinds of parameters or scales of assessment, such as representativity, and – of course - pluralism or diversity.

As in all kinds of aesthetic discussion, this does not necessarily entail the “relativity” of quality or its “subjectivity”, in the sense of being something that is going on “in” the consciousness or is a property of some lived experience (“Erlebnis”) of a person. On the contrary: quality is always “objective” in the original (modest, and slightly trivial) sense of being inter-subjective and something that is “outside the mind” or “in the object”, not in me or my brain (or perceptual apparatus like the eye, ear, finger-tips or other parts of my body). The circumstance that scales of taste and quality belong to wider discourse fields, are related to other maxims and principles, habits and views does not in the least change this objectivity: on the contrary the essence of objectivity is precisely its being anchored in a human society and set-up of artifacts.

The task in establishing communicative dialogue is to agree on the use of the term in specified contexts.

Specified suggestions to operate quality criteria on a practical level, in the media field, exist, such as those proposed by The project for excellence in journalism, www.journalism.org. This frame of quality assessment treats a proportion of programme genres and the representation of diverse opinions in local TV-programmes during a period of measurement in pretty simple diagram form. The merit of this kind of quality measurement is its specificity and its resolute selectivity of certain criteria, as well as its avoidance of the traps marked by the “Soviet criterion”, that is, Go below genre diversity! It includes a plurality of views and political perspectives among its criteria of quality and, consequently this kind of quality measurement subsumes diversity under quality. This might be a problem in an environment of growing specialization - often criticised as “fragmentation”, where it is not a token of quality of a sports programme to include political debates or religious services, or vice versa. And, a sports channel (if there still are “channels” in ten years) should not be praised for transmitting business news. And going into other kinds of cultural pro-

---

296 Bourdieu has a predecessor in Norbert Elias’s (1997/1939) comparative work on bourgeois and nobility tastes in France and Germany. A Swedish work using Bourdieu’s investigation of taste is Erling Bjurström’s study (1997) of youth culture in the perspective of taste discourses.

297 The Nobel literature prize jury has selected at least two philosophers for the prize, viz. Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre. French philosophers, apart from Sartre, also de Beauvoir, Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault, to mention just a few, have also worked in both the arts and philosophy.

298 This is the sense of the medieval understanding of “objective being”, which is neither “in the soul/mind” nor in “nature”, in the way physical things are.

duction, or media, like books, this is not possible – it is precisely the merit of a book to concentrate on one specific issue.

Access and pluralism of supply

Jan van Cuylenburg\(^{300}\) has pleaded for replacing the discussion about pluralism by a discussion on “access”. The argument seems at first sight rather convincing: the expansion of material in the media is so huge that there is simply something for everyone. The problem is thus not to promote a diverse or pluralistic supply of media products but rather to safeguard access for these products for those who demand them. Social control over production, for example by reserving some space for public service broadcasting, could be relaxed and the new situation of abundance greeted as a situation of freedom for everyone. In the future cultural or media environment, purveyors of “content” (programmes, newspapers, books, material on Internet sites) should, obviously (just as today!) not be expected to deliver all different kinds or genres of content. This is not more surprising than the fact that a book is devoted to one subject, not all. Diversity need not be aspired for in the supply: it is there already.

This argument has validity in the sense that diversity, in the relevant sense of pluralism discussed above, is a property of a social structure, a “media landscape”, not individual products. But there are serious flaws in this argument, basically amounting to the problems evoked by C. Edwin Baker – and which might be termed the “illusion of compensation” – referred to several times already. The simplest way of presenting them might be by citing the position of Robert McChesney as regards the liberating force of Internet. He compares the freedom on the Internet with the freedom of everyone to throw a piece of paper with a political message on Broadway. It is a freedom but rather pointless in regard of the real situation of the media landscape, or, generally, the actual communication structure of the modern world, including the USA.

The point is that talk about access, instead of pluralism of supply, has no point, unless it goes beyond the merely formal aspects of access, in the sense of “something being there” (at any price, somewhere in the world etc.). That is, to an access being really opened for users and consumers. ‘Access’ is not a simple concept, not more than ‘diversity’ or ‘pluralism’, or for that matter ‘freedom’, notably in the context of freedom of information\(^{301}\). Discussions on the conditions for providing access to disabled people might illustrate this problem. Theoretically, cinema is accessible to blind people, music concerts to the deaf, philosophy courses to the mentally handicapped, gyms to the old or mutilated. This kind of “access” is obviously quite nominal, since the relevant question is: to what degree does an environment have to be adapted in order to respond to demands of access for everyone? Some people will, simply by virtue of their personal situations or physiological equipment, never access some of the aspects of life. Some of these aspects are, however, by adaptation, accessible to the same people: the blind could listen to audiobooks, read Braille, etc. Wheel-chairs and adapted entries might make dancing possible also for those without legs etc. These are all aspects of “supply”, in a wider understanding of environmental planning. Access is something which is relative to the equipment (physiological, mental, economic, social) of the individual or a group, and in all the mentioned cases, a structure which could be adapted by modifying the kinds of supply (“customizing”) present in a given area, social context etc. In suggesting that abundance of supply in general overcomes the structural conditions of a market one risks to fall into the trap of someone suggesting that, since there is, theoretically, a help for each functional disability, the environment does not have to be changed as such. No need for social intervention…

Instead a much more modest and qualified variety of ‘access’ seems to be relevant, to sound something like this: A sufficiently diversified (politically, culturally,...) media supply, which

\(^{300}\) Van Cuylenburg 1998.

\(^{301}\) In much of media discussions on pluralism in later decades the distinction between a formal freedom, such as the one laid down in legislation, and a real freedom of information has been emphasised, actually constituting a demarcation line between liberal and socialist ideologies.
is economically, technically and culturally accessible to the majority of citizens, _in a particular relevant area or market_ (world, national, regional, local, interest-group-related etc.), and also catering for _reasonably large minority interests_, fulfills the role of opening access to cultural production which the “adapted social supply” that a pluralistic media landscape including traditional broad general media such as daily newspapers or public broadcasting is considered to do. Supply, in this sense, _includes access_ (in real terms), since access is just not there if the supply is too difficult or too expensive to reach. More concretely: In a future, where “all” people will have access to all kinds of programming over some Internet facility, open to everyone, just as telephones are open to everyone in the rich world (this is still a minority of the human race), access – not the supply as such – might be the crucial problem to deal with. Supply will, however, even in this fictive situation, have to be _monitored_ from the point of view of diversity or pluralism, for access in the real sense to be implemented. I will come back to the subject of _risk and proof_ as an additional dimension and complication for this monitoring task. Experience from the deregulated European television landscape (as well as the commercial USA television world) tells us that the economic realities of markets tend to _narrow_ rather than widen the scope and variety of programme supply, not to say political opinions and other views coming forward, in this brave new world of abundance of supply of content …

Instead, still the ideals of general access to a minimum of information and cultural production in the broadcasting sector are, by and large, better reached by “Socialist” models of state-controlled enterprises (public service) or state regulation. This structure has, in democratic Western Europe, been very successful from the point of view of pluralism and quality, despite the tendencies to think that “deregulation” is a better guarantee for providing as wide an access to diverse media products as possible. In the press sector as well as book production private ownership and market structures have been self-evident, and considered quite adequate in providing access for the majority of the public sphere, while cultural production sectors like research and education (curiously enough, not included in Bourdieu’s enumeration of cultural production sectors in, for example, “On Television”) is mostly public, though often paid for.

The new abundance of distribution possibilities and competition may to some extent change this situation, but as far as experience tells us hitherto, nothing indicates that pluralism or quality in broadcasting is promoted by reducing the responsibility of the democratically accountable public sector, whatever indicators of quality or pluralism are used. The overwhelming evidence instead points towards market mechanisms leading to “more of the same”, of soap operas, advertising, quizzes, reality shows, in short, entertainment of all kinds, as well as infotainment etc. The radical difference of broadcasting from other media sectors is a fact to be observed but not denied. This does, however, not exclude the possibility to organise broadcasting supply in quite different ways than today, for example by shifting the role of the state from sustaining distinct corporations to operating quality support programmes more on the line of traditional cultural policy. Obviously this whole structure points also the fact that ownership of production facilities is not the exclusive basis for pluralism, or for, generally, diversity of content. On the contrary: television and commercial radio is much more, demonstrably so, uniform in its programme concepts, genres and other features than state-owned or public services in broadcasting. The difference between media sectors – and cultural production spheres as a whole is striking and should not be brought out of public attention. _Competition_ in the ordinary commercial sense _does not_, _in these sectors_, _promote quality, pluralism or diversity_. Market mechanisms are simply, in the present organisation of economic life in cultural production, more powerful than the most radical open access to information, by technical means or otherwise.

---

302 I have elsewhere discussed another “Soviet criterion” – the thought experiment of someone in Siberia with sufficient intelligence, money and knowledge enough to decrypt and use foreign media and read between the lines, use mouth-to-mouth information to form an adequate picture – does he have “access”? In a sense yes. This issue might be termed the Problem of the Good Consumer, who is rich, intelligent, and knowledgeable enough to gather information not accessible to everyone but a privileged few… Is access there or not?
might accomplish. Even if everyone on earth is equipped with a full-fledged computer and the Internet opened to all kinds of distribution of supply everywhere in the world, market mechanisms will, if unbridled, promote certain content, suffocate other kinds and shape the real supply in a way which is not necessarily opening the information high-ways to the general public sufficiently enough to participate in the governance of their own societies.

So, even if the supply has drastically expanded, access improved and the level of education raised, the control over cultural production structure will remain a decisive factor.

Finally, in any kind of quality measurement system, indicators have to be identified. Those will, however, rarely be uncontroversial; for example the constant disputes between “popular” and “high-brow” dimensions of quality will probably continue. Since access is inherently dependent on the “equipment” (habitus, as Bourdieu would have said, with his medieval predecessors) of each individual, in her capacity as media user or consumer, one root of this kind of disputes may be sought in what may be a consequence of a “paradox of education”, to be roughly formulated as follows:

1. If you learn something, you must admit your previous ignorance.
2. If you teach somebody something you must categorize that person as ignorant on that particular point.
3. Nobody likes to be seen as or to feel ignorant.
4. Education is learning and teaching, therefore education is not a pleasant undertaking.
5. If you do not learn you will not profit from knowledge.

The distinction between high-brow and low-brow in cultural production and reception (use) is often formulated in terms of requirements of education for receiving the high-brow products. Low-brow is generally considered as easier to grasp and to use. Even on a meta-level, viz. the study of cultural phenomena, distinguishing between high and low brow risks to fall victim to the complexities as regards quality indicators – as emerges from the already cited debate about the political role of cultural studies accounted for above.

**Policy and politics**

McQuail defines *media policy* as follows: “any societal project of control, intervention, or supervision in relation to the mass media, for the ostensible benefit of some section of society, or in the general public interest”. This definition is presented in the wider context of cultural studies and its relation to cultural policy\(^{303}\).

While ‘policy’ is a term with a wide use in the English language, *politics* seems to have a certain negative ring in English, perhaps due to its similarity with ‘politic’, which is defined, in the Penguin Pocket English Dictionary as (of a person) “shrewd and sagacious in managing, contriving, or dealing”\(^{304}\). McQuail defines ‘media politics’ as follows:

>“Media politics refers to the struggle for power over media, over the course of their development and over normative definitions of their role in society.”\(^{305}\)

A number of points regarding the use of these two central terms in dealing with the public space might be salient.

‘Policy’, being defined as a “societal project”, raises the question as to whose project it is, ‘societal’ transgressing the frontier between public and private (and civil) sectors. ‘Policy’ is applicable both to individuals, corporations and political institutions.

A different, though in some degree intersecting, distinction is made for the entire field of cultural production by Bourdieu in his “Distinction”. He draws a distinction between “cultural policy” (*politique culturelle*) and the “politics of culture” (*la politique de culture*). Cultural policy is in his understanding a separate sector of action by public bodies and administrations – normally de-

\(^{303}\) McQuail 1997:42. The subject is also discussed in Tony Bennett (1998)

\(^{304}\) Penguin Pocket English Dictionary p.643.

\(^{305}\) Ibid.
fined in budgetary terms in a public national or local budget. Politics is the broader social role which culture (including cultural policy!) plays in a stratified society – precisely to uphold or enhance existing social divisions and relations of power.

The term politics may thus convey, in English, negative associations, in its primary focus on power struggles – in which media policy is, just as cultural policy, an element. When a minister (for example the British Prime minister and his colleagues) undertakes a change of legislation which is a door-opener for further concentration of ownership in the private broadcasting sector, he is active in media policy in the ordinary sense of the term, the change of the Broadcasting Act is part of the work of the ministry for cultural affairs. But this change of legislation is obviously also a part of the power struggle, both within the cultural (media) sphere, and within the society as a whole – it is well known that the power of the most important British-US media group, News Corporation, was decisive for the outcome of political processes in the United Kingdom in two subsequent general elections, 1997 and 2002.

Also at the “policy” level, however, there is much controversy in the idea of “media policy” and cultural policy – not least historically. The notion of media policy is as such, or was at least for a long time, in liberal and conservative circles more or less equalled to societal projects of control in the narrow sense of ‘societal’, meaning public or state intervention in the production of content. These political divergences parallel those that occurred in the context of cultural policy (in the narrow sense of arts, and cultural heritage policy).

The German constitution codifies this attitude to some extent, relegating cultural policy - including media policy - (together with education) to state (not national) level – in principle. Some federal regulations have, however, been adopted in the field of ownership control. Only recently did the German federal government appoint a minister for cultural affairs, the first one being a rather well-known philosopher.

Policies in the “sectorial” sense, defined for example for research or culture, are necessary to relate to the roles of these policies in a broader political spectrum – whether they should be seen as independent areas in themselves or subservient (instrumental) to other political objectives, such as growth, welfare, democratic awareness, solidarity, national identity etc. In hard times governments tend to mobilise “culture”, or at least art, for some purpose other than art itself.

And conversely, cultural policy decisions might be of only marginal importance to the organisation of cultural life itself, by virtue of the fact that other policy fields determine their conditions much deeper than the restricted sectorial policy decisions. Regional planning might be much more influential for the preservation of the cultural heritage than the scanty subventions coming from the public authorities. And general economic policy regulations on advertising, taxation, VAT rates etc., might be decisive for media corporations, more so than specific media legislation. Media policy is mostly incorporated or subsumed under much more prestigious policy fields than cultural policy, viz. the field of constitutional law and eo ipso the fundamentals of democratic government.

Public intervention, since the 1980s, lost many of its earlier advocates, to the advantage of market-oriented policies - though recent financial market break-downs have reversed trends. The “societal project” referred to by McQuail thus engages also other agents than public authorities. Cultural policy, and media policy in particular, concern not only elected authorities, but involve policy-makers in other spheres of public life, both organisations and private business interests.

Jan van Cuylenburg’s article relates to this more general tendency in a “late modern” or even “post-modern” age. Yet this development appears, looking from the point of view of “policy” and “politics”, ambiguous, as might be described, at least, in the following different ways.

On one hand one might regard the critical attitude towards state intervention as one step forward in the “modernisation” of society, by the successive introduction of capitalist market mechanisms also in spheres that have before been subject to sovereign public planning and political decisions. It could be seen, in this way, as an “extension of enlightenment”, leaving choices and decisions to citizens (clients and producers as well as traders) rather than kings or princes.
The surrender of social planning would thus mean a conversion to a faith in individual rationality, as the determinant of a collective rationality: many small decisions will, by feedback mechanisms (communication), lead to better results than organised planning.

On the other hand, the opposite view is also plausible. The withdrawal from systematic and rational planning by representative authorities, which are in the last instance elected by voters, might also be regarded as a surrender of rationality. Why should it not be possible to organise aggregates of society, such as local authorities, regions, states, federations etc., in a way, which is just as rational as capitalist enterprises? One might even talk of an ambivalent or even contradictory attitude of capitalism in regard of political planning. In these days (autumn 2008) this ambivalence is striking, since the only way of securing the functions of financial markets has been, in all capitalist countries, massive state intervention. If it is true that rational calculation, planning and organisation of commercial enterprises on a relatively long-term basis, where deficits some years might be turned into profits the next year, is the prerequisite of the success of capitalism, the opposite is also true. That is, nothing says that the same considerations of economic and other kinds of rationality is not possible in a wider social context, too. The question would be the following: is rationality at some level of aggregation per se impossible or inefficient (for instance at the level of democratic, or undemocratic, state control)? Or could we discern any particular property or criterion, whereby we might judge that, at that particular level, rationality (planning, control, prediction, optimisation) is out of date. Is social planning of a state, a nation, or a local community by nature more difficult than economic planning? Why should it per se be possible to run an enterprise like Microsoft, Unilever, General Motors or Ford in a rational, calculated fashion, and not a state, the turn-over of which is just a fraction of these huge corporations? One simple, seemingly obvious, answer might be: social planning has too many considerations to take into account, many of which are not compatible with “result” expressed as the bottom line in black for a private profit-making company. This answer is, as demonstrated very clearly by economists like Joseph Stiglitz, inadequate. The rationality of private capitalist enterprise is entirely dependent on its environment, viz. legal stability, infrastructure, political transparency at some (not necessarily just or democratic) level, etc. It is not a coincidence that the advocates of market solutions also are advocates of transparency, “frameworks”, and clearness of competition conditions – and are, at an international level – ferocious adherents of new and compelling regulations, within the EU, WTO, OECD, and other bodies where free trade negotiations are pursued. No market economy is able to flourish if the market place is not framed in an adequate and optimally rational manner.

And, turning more to the pure political dimension: is the rejection of rationality in the more general sense, also encompassing economic life, a rejection of democracy, to the advantage either of anarchy, or totalitarianism? And thus fall victim to the fate of the famous (fictitious?) interlocutor of Winston Churchill, who was put into silence, when asked to provide a better alternative to democracy?

To reverse the question: if capitalism is successful, is it because of the lack of central rational public structures? Affirmative answers might have to reject modern management planning, controlling, logistics systems, “lean production”, follow-up mechanisms, steering, optimisation by calculating, computing, designing risk perspectives, scenarios etc… That is, planning, planning, planning, and central control of a process.

My conclusion is the following: let us not imagine that reason has got any identifiable limits, neither in “practical”, political fields nor in the theoretical field. Philosophically speaking, let us not repeat the mistake of those followers of Kant, who misunderstood his talk about the “thing /considered in/at itself”, as if something definitely describable exists, but is in principle unattainable (reachable/in the reach of) by reason, in the broad meaning of the word, including both understanding and sensing, Verstand and Empfindung.

The notions of policy and politics are, in McQuail’s definitions, wisely enough, given a rather wide range of choice as to the actors. That is, the question of ‘whose’ project is left open as
to private, individual, corporate business, organised interests and networks. Under the next item of our dictionary a more consistent application of the notion of policy/politics will be proposed – a use that will include some kind of historical shift of perspective.

Let us just include one more observation, which pertains to a development touching the cultural, legal and political spheres of social life. Globalisation has one aspect which is, because of its somewhat tedious and detailed nature, often neglected. This aspect has been given the rather artificial name of “jurisdictionalisation” by the French scholar Mireille Delmas-Marty. This means that, not only are social actions, political life, economic transactions in a growing degree organised and tied together into all kinds of “networks” or complex webs of dependences, but this web is also given a legal form. A legal form means not only that there exist indefinitely many international agreements, declarations, conventions, recommendations, resolutions, proclamations, but that, increasingly, these legal explicit instruments are accompanied by some kind of executive or implementation mechanisms. The United Nations Organisation is for most of it an umbrella, and even includes mechanisms of the ultimate sovereignty privilege, which is in modernity normally linked to national states, viz. the monopoly of the use of violence. Jurisdiction means that there is a legal system follow-up mechanism, such as police or military organisations, punishment rules and institutions like prisons, arrest possibilities, courts etc.

On a global scale, this means that some kinds of administrative mechanisms function for judging, effective implementation of sentences etc. The European Union is unique in having pursued longer than perhaps other international bodies the implementation build-up, but analogous mechanisms are envisaged or already constructed in numerous other areas and social fields. This is linked to the reduction of power of national states, the “refeudalisation” process being one element of this development, but it is also, even primarily, a reduction in an ordered manner, whereby legitimate processes of transfer of power and authority are taking place. This development is piece-meal and very often subject to contempt for its “lack of efficiency”, bureaucracy and legalism – but may nevertheless be a kind of “tsunami” of representational democratic ideals flooding this earth. It is no coincidence that this international “jurisdictionalisation” process meets resistance in some sensitive areas, such as the war crime court instituted by the international community in the Hague.

It has, moreover, a parallel in the process of convergence on the ethical level of democratic and humanistic ideals and justifications being gradually adopted in international discourse. The World Value Survey might be regarded as an idealistic and naive entreprise of a theoretical nature, or a pretentious attempt to resuscitate the theological, authoritarian, natural-rights-founded or universalistic ethical principles of Kant. This is, however, probably a mistake, as serious as the denial of evolutionism in its time. Actually, the opposite view, viz. that moral and legal systems are only the outcome of restricted interest-related considerations might turn out to be as naive as the idea that the earth is flat, because you do not, at a moderate altitude see its curves…

Public

The common opposition to ‘public’ is ‘private’, though lately the term ‘civil society’ has tended to denote an intermediate sphere between the private and the public.

The notion of public is central both to cultural policy and media policy in the narrow sense. In particular, media policy debates have been hot around the notion of ‘public service broadcasting’. The definitions of ‘public service (broadcasting)’ have however reached a level where, at least according to some researchers, the expression is impracticable not only for scholarly pur-
poses but also for a political discussion with a reasonable degree of clarity. To a certain degree, still, the debate on public service broadcasting brings out some of the complexities of the notion of ‘public’ in a general sense, which might be an argument for keeping it in a scholarly discussion.

Trine Syvertsen in Oslo mentions 171 definitions in an article on public service broadcasting distinguishing between three broad rather divergent kinds of interpretation of the notion of public.

1. Public is controlled by the elected authorities (state etc. ownership)
2. Public is a service available to anyone in the entire national (local, regional) territory – i.e. not reserved for those who subscribe etc.
3. Public is in the interest of the audience, or what the audience wants (as established by popularity measurements).

She concludes by a plea for a deleting the notion of public service broadcasting. Her distinctions as a matter of fact also affect the discussion on “access” above.

‘Public’ may also, however, be considered from the point of view of a translation of the German term ‘öffentlich’, and associated to Habermas’s early work on the “bourgeois public sphere” (note the difficulty in translating these terms into workable English). The public sphere (die Öffentlichkeit) to Habermas is a “forum” for exchange of views by different forms of expressions (direct or mediated, for example in print) in a social group and between groups. Habermas argued that late capitalism had destroyed this kind of meeting-place, by replacing it with “representation” - constituting a step backwards to a more “feudal” way of demonstration of power of individual dominant actors in society – this is the gist of his notion of “re-feudalisation”.

Habermas’s early work adopted the criticism of Adorno and Horkheimer against cultural industry (in its commercial American shape) – though he has later adopted a more conciliatory attitude to “popular” culture, even in its industrialised or mediatised shape, in accordance with attitudes in Walter Benjamin. Thus he does not seem to exclude any means of communication from playing a role in the “communicative action”, which he sees as the basic field for meaning-creation, institution-building, including ethical discourse, and criteria of truth also in a scientific context.

Habermas’s notion of ‘re-feudalisation’ is used in this study in a somewhat wider sense, in some degree inspired by Susan Strange. Actually, her proposal to include among the “authorities” of an international (global, in a restricted sense) sphere of political interaction trans-national corporations, in manufacturing, trading or financial sectors, and the major accountancy firms, calls for a new conception of both the ‘public sphere’, ‘politics’, and ‘authorities’. “Re-feudalisation” of international relations, starting from the independence of the trans-national corporations on an economic level, acquires its full force in an analysis of the international political arena. A set of actors alongside the national states, or organisations of national states on the international political arena, acquired the “authority” to negotiate, and to perform changes in the conditions of life of important segments of the people of the world - for better or worse. A revised notion of ‘politics’, as well as ‘public’, includes strategies and actions of all these “princes” alongside with the (in an ever increasing degree democratically elected) “kings” of national states. Sometimes the rule of these “princes” is beneficial, sometimes it just deprives the legitimate rulers of their power.

Whether we like it or not, this is a new situation. Let us not forget, however, that the new world order has one positive and happy circumstance in its background: the demobilisation of national states and the breaking down of borders presupposes a relatively peaceful coexistence between states on the planet. This may sound cynical in view of all the blood-shed going on (today

---

310 Habermas (1962)
311 Cf. Strange 1996.
312 It might be disputable, for example, whether Bill Gates or the Saudi royal dictators, would bring more well-being to the people of Saudi Arabia...
in Iraq, Sudan, Uganda, Tchetchnia, Kashmir, Darfour… etc. etc.) or the absurd indifference of the rest of the world to Africa’s sufferings and deaths. Nevertheless, the détente following the end of the East-West arms race and nuclear tensions, and the reconciliation between Communist (Capitalist) China and the capitalist world is undeniable as a prerequisite for opening up of borders, promotion of trade etc.

Whereas European medieval politics was about diverse war-lords and their struggles with kings and the Church, today’s politics rests upon, often reckless and greedy, shareholders’ interests in often rather anonymous corporations. The merchants of Venice were greedy and reckless too, which did not prevent Venice from being regarded as an apogee of Western Christian civilisation, although it destroyed the remainders of Christian (Byzantine) empire, thereby paving the way for the Ottoman empire (which, actually, to a great extent was a faithful follower of the customs of the Christian Byzantion). Generally speaking, the good things of knowledge and wealth may be disseminated by the bad things greed and violence, just as by peaceful teaching and trade.

A new division of power results from the new peace, and at the same time allows new “authorities” (to use Strange’s word) to be established, beside the public authorities. These authorities do not obey the rules of the “public” in the most important aspect of this word: public is derived from “the people”. The people, populus, demos, elects, in a democracy, authorities – but these authorities are not the only ones. Although it cannot be denied that democratic procedures and authentic institutions equipped with powers, have been, in a growing degree, entering the world arena during the last decades, the other “authorities”, or origins of power, have also been able to extend their influence and compete with democratic authorities, just like the barons and princes of ancient times.

One crucial opposition in this field is between public – in German öffentlich, derived from “open” – and private, or perhaps rather secret. The talk of an “open society” (Popper) implies both a liberty for the individual to live a life undisturbed by unnecessary regulations and constraints, but it also implies the openness of power as a whole. If governments are not open to criticism, and ultimately to dismissal, by the people, in some kind of scrutiny, election or public debate, democracy does not exist. The essence of most governance is, however, in most societies also secrecy: until a decision is taken, preparations and deliberations are kept secret, “secretaries” are those that write letters but keep them out of reach for others… But secrecy has to go hand in hand with publicity, otherwise democracy does not prevail. The public domain is the domain where secrecy is being broken and transparency established.

The private sector, unlike the public sector, is – private: this means that the decisions taken are deprived of the possibility of inspection to everyone, kept secret – for reasons of business, personal integrity or other motives. In the public sector, every secret should, in principle, taking the idea of openness seriously, be motivated separately. The openness of a society, or political regime, might be tested precisely by reading its Secrecy Acts. While very short and general secrecy clauses (“in the interest of the state” or the like) should be a reason for worry, also very long and detailed acts might indicate that something is not very healthy in legislation. An instructive example might be taken from a country, like Sweden, which proudly proclaims as a constitutional rule a general principle of openness of all public documents, but has quite an impressive long Secrecy Act….

Now, ‘public’ means not only open and transparent to inspection, it may also be extended to mean, as pointed out by Syvertsen, in the narrower context of public service broadcasting, “being in the service of the (majority of) people”.

A public service is, generally speaking, a service organized for the benefit of everybody, not for the profit of individual persons or groups. Normally it means that it is also affordable to anybody. This kind of service is normally also open for inspection, subject to decisions by public authorities, and ultimately accountable to the people at large in elections etc. But also these serv-

313 Actually mostly American pension funds….
ices might, quite legitimately, have to keep much of their work secret, for integrity, competition or other reasons.

Since the public sector is being organised, to a growing degree - mainly with the exception of military organisations, law courts, police, and the central bodies of government - after legal models copied or transferred from business life new problems of “publicity” arise. Even in the zones of exception this trend is noticeable: US military structure in Iraq is highly dependent on “mercenaries”, from private security firms and police activities are supplemented or replaced by similar private security firms, prisons are privatised, and, last but not least, lawyers are by tradition private and profit-making. Private “courts” also exercise a large influence in business life – often employing judges who, in their leisure time, make a lot of money, serving as arbitrators between business companies, who often prefer this much cheaper and quicker procedure to an ordinary court trial.

Also in the Realm of Mind, much of the changed division of power is perceivable. The reduced role for the public broadcasting companies in Europe is one such – rather natural, in view of the new technical and commercial structures - change. This is not merely a matter of extending the traditional independence of media as a “Third (fourth) estate” or of the new “mediatisation” of politics. In the last ten years is rather - despite half-hearted efforts of national governments, as well as modest attempts of intervention by international organisations, such as the Council of Europe or, for a period, the European Commission, to regulate the concentration of media enterprises - a growing acceptance of private business processes, such as mergers, or other kinds of concentration of control over markets. Sometimes this acceptance is motivated by the hope to keep at least some power under national control and national (or European) competition regulation, that is in some way within the public domain. Mostly it is, however, part of a general faith in the blessings of market economy.

The hope of retaining some national prerogatives is however often quickly overrun by trans-national merger processes. “Our” (British, French, Italian, German, Swedish) company often manifests a weak interest in “its” country or people, even in cases where a national government may have been very eager to not obstruct mergers or “consolidation” of business companies, in order to promote “our” market position in the international struggle of economic interests. In particular trans-national media, such as Rupert Murdoch’s production units, all over the English-speaking world, are capable of passing obstacles set up by national authorities, if any… The idea of competitiveness of media is more complex than that of ordinary material goods.

The public sector is in the Reign of Mind governed by a, continuing the medieval historical analogue, “church” too. The media - the mass media in a traditional sense and the immensely rapidly growing network of ‘intermediary’ media in computerised communication - are a largely independent network of knowledge (and power over minds), that serves as the tool of communication between “princes” and “kings” all over the world. This analogy has been worked out in particular by Régis Débray, founder of the discipline of “mediology”, thereby reconnecting to the inclusion by Ernst Cassirer of religion in the cultural sphere.

This “church of the media” may also play a - to a large extent unpredictable - role in turning down actors on the arena, whether kings or princes, states or corporations. The analogy between church and media holds also in a narrower national context - the talk about the media as “estates” have illustrated this since long. We are sometimes faced with a kind of “investiture battle” between publicly elected representatives and the media, which rather frequently manage to depose politicians.

---
314 Instead of separately motivating the entry of private profit interests into sectors that have been reserved for public operations, the European Union has reversed the principle – public economic activities have to be motivated, and are mostly viewed as exceptions.
315 Just to cite some Swedish cases: half of Volvo became Ford, Saab became General Motors, Sydkraft Eon, Marabou Kraft Foods. Mostly the trade unions did not object to these mergers, as little as the government.
316 Débray.
Thus, the retreat of the (national) state opens up for a new understanding of the notions of public, politics and policy – where the “societal” projects referred to by McQuail of business conglomerates, networks of accountancy consultants, organised financial investment and speculation interests, compete with those of national governments, with unions of states or international organisations, both legal and illegal. Though this might be seen as just one step further in the process of “modernisation”, as conceived by Weber and others, it might also be regarded the opposite way as “an era of feudalism revisited”.

**Measuring cultural production**

Problems of measurement of social facts – often equal to establishing these facts - are subject to wide dissension, some aspects of which have been discussed above. While some participants in the debates, and actors in the political fields concerned, point to and rely on established ways of measuring, collecting data, compiling statistics in different traditions and employing mathematical models, others express doubts about the relevance of these data.

From more “positivistic” approaches in Lazarsfeld and Berelson, Bourdieu’s “cultural” intermediate position, over to interpretive methods opinions diverge. The very idea of trying to include social patterns, figures, shapes, (Gestalten), and mapping fields etc. in the concept of measurement might offend some traditions, while other schools happily accept different sources and methods of gathering information, data or whatever the sources may be termed. The notion of “data” sometimes passes too easily – in epistemological contexts the idea of having “unedited” or theory-unladen observational elements of knowledge is, to say the least, disputed.

Policy-makers (in the senses alluded to above) seeking support in measurements of various kinds to corroborate their proposals and strategies - or “visions”317, are generally convinced that nothing defeats your adversary in a discussion as well as numbers and diagrams, although it rarely convinces her or him.

Without surrendering to general relativism in social science, more than in natural sciences, as well as in history (sometimes included among the social sciences), it is usually taken for granted the initial selection of facts determines the outcome of the research. Just as “history is the history of the victors”, the respective social sciences, including ethnography, ethnology, sociology, economy, etc. adopt one of several possible perspectives, and the study of the “same phenomenon” might be differently pursued, in different disciplines and from various angles of thought. History might treat the feats of kings and princes in wars and conquests, or the conditions of the people at large. This approach of social science and the humanities is sometimes referred to as “constructionism”, explicitly involving theories, philosophies, perspectives, among those political and ideological ones, in the basis of research318 for . Constructionism is also an accepted approach in logic and mathematics (Hilbert, intuitionists, among others) and has a counterpart in the natural sciences in “models”, the status of which might vary. Evolutionism and Big Bang theories have, it seems, acquired a status exceeding that of a “model” in the common sense.

In social sciences and, to some extent, also the humanities (e.g. linguistics), numbers and mathematical models play a significant role as well. They do, however, have to compete with interpretations and descriptive frameworks in a more clear-cut way319, an approach to research in philology and exegetics, practised by Schleiermacher, and generalized by Dilthey and later “hermeneuticians”. In research on cultural production and cultural politics, the effort in later decades of historical research to discern a “popular” perspective is a model. One trendsetting work, was

---

317 I have some idiosynrasy to this term, because of its pretensions and historical ignorance – visions being the mystical or dreamt experiences of saints and other spiritual leaders. The use of this term by local politicians and grocery owners alike does not fill me with respect.

318 For a good discussion on some aspects of social constructionism see Hacking 2004.

319 Again, mathematics, among the “exact” sciences, has to include interpretations of some of its basic notions, e.g. ‘number’.
Peter Burke’s history of popular culture⁹²⁰ and the social historical tradition of the French “Annales” school, with its brilliant eye-opening works on, for example, the Middle Ages (*Montaillou* by Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie⁹²¹), followed by and inspiring Michel Foucault’s epoch-making studies on madness, sexuality, classification, punishment, knowledge etc.

The “paradigm shift” in Kuhn’s sense⁹²² has become a cliché, first applied to natural sciences but easily applicable to works in the social and cultural sciences.

---

⁹²² Kuhn 1996
MEASURING PLURALISM IN THE CONTENT OF MEDIA

So far, the discussion has mostly treated problems of a general nature in cultural production – the entire Reign of Mind. Frequent examples have, however, as a consequence of the initial inspiration of this study, already been taken from the mass media sector. In this section attention will be turned to specific problems, centred on the media, primarily the “mass media” in the classical sense (that is, radio, television and press).

The overriding question, which pervades the political debate on the consequences of structural changes in the mass media sector, might be recalled, in simple terms, as follows: Do the structural changes in the mass media sector, such as concentration of ownership, reduction of the number of some of the traditional media products like daily newspapers, on the general background of changes of human conditions labelled globalisation, digitisation and mediatisation, etc. have any demonstrable impact on the content of the products?

The question might be regarded as taking us back to the very primitive beginnings of this study, but the preceding analysis of some of the crucial concepts involved should, hopefully, have taken the subject further. In the last instance, this question is a specific case of the inquiry into the impact of the power structures of cultural production on the products themselves – primarily pertaining to political aspects, notably the aspect of political pluralism.

The traditional mass media constitute, sociologically, an intermediate sphere. Though not normally, in common sense, included in culture, working conditions in the mass media sector and the social circles in which workers of this sector mingle, are intertwined with other parts of cultural production sector in a wider sense, that is, the arts, education, scientific research and some segments of public administration.

The observations in this chapter might therefore serve both as a detailed reflection on one specific part of cultural production as a whole, and, perhaps, as a case study for modelling future development in other parts of cultural production.

In approaching the question above, one is inevitably brought into a cluster of terms where measures are central to provide – for “content” and for “structure”. Since measuring pluralism, in the content of media or in other fields of cultural production is no exception to the general principle of the “history being written by the victors” - a “perspectival” approach impresses itself. Measuring serves some purpose, individual or, mostly, collective or social. The basic distinctions as to the lack of comparability or correspondence between plurality, or pluralism, of producers and that of content, permeates or colours most of this space of terms and concepts.

For the purpose of measuring pluralism in the sector of media a series of distinctions and choices have already been discussed in the “lexicon” above. Taking into account the divide (or dialectical relation) between structure and content in cultural production also the following qualifications seem necessary to recall:

1. Pluralism in the production, in the media and other cultural products on one hand, has to be distinguished from pluralism in society at large, or social life outside cultural production on the other. The distinction has been noted already, to say that pluralism “outside” cultural production for example concern ethnic and linguistic differences, geographic and social divergences, views and values, opinions and attitudes, customs and forms of life – all factors which are normally included in an enlarged notion of culture, but not in narrower understandings. It is worth pointing out that, if any sense is to be made out of a discussion of the relation between the cultural “sector” and a social sector “outside” it, one has to apply a concept of cultural production narrower than the anthropological one. The media, the arts and the cultural heritage are a traditional first candidate for this narrower concept of culture.\(^3\) Candidates might be cultural production in a sense applied in this

\(^3\) A parallel discussion exists in discourse analytical schools – where some schools (discourse theory, in the Laclau-Mouffe version) reject the existence of a social discourse separate from the discourse of texts and “under-texts” or contexts – whereas other schools affirm the possibility to discuss a relationship between a social context level and a discourse context level. Cf. the account provided in Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2002.
study, that is, closer to that suggested by for example Bourdieu, or Cassirer. This notion is still narrower than understanding culture as “form of life”, to use Wittgenstein’s formula, or numerous other suggestions, such as the one propagated by the World Commission on Culture in 1995.

a. On the level of production, pluralism could apply to different levels of production: in the media one could discern companies, editorial staff, owners/controlling interests, as well as geographical level, social level, quality level.

b. Pluralism could – though here the notion of diversity might be better fitted – apply to market conditions: monopoly, oligopoly, monopolistic competition, competition between equally strong actors etc.

2. Pluralism could also be applied to various levels of content: diversity of opinions, diversity of attitudes, styles, representation of social and ethnic groups etc.

In both production and content, one might (cf. above) talk about “structure”, one sometimes labelled “external” and the other “internal”. The initial question is basically about how the structures or fields “match” each other. The distinctions provided do imply that this “matching” is a rather complex business – it is difficult to give a clear-cut answer to our initial question, and, furthermore, the complexities are exploited for rhetorical purposes.

Pluralism is, finally, in the politically central debates, thus primarily something that applies to the total aggregate structure of content and production. The crucial issue under debate is to examine whether, and in what manner and degree, changes in external structure – such as those described above in the sections on globalisation etc., and the usual concentration processes – determine the content of media production. Debates are specific for separate media sectors, for radio, television and press etc., acknowledging that it might be a question of degrees, not totalities, of parts rather than wholes. The perspective does, actually, look like the old question raised by Marx and Engels – in opposition to Hegel – and discussed ever since: is there anything like a “superstructure” which is determined by another kind of structure, the “material” (not necessarily congruent with what I have called here “external”) production structure?

The question might both be taken as an empirical sociological or a historical one, as well as a “meta-scientific” recommendation on how to analyse social processes. The discussion of the relations or interdependence between the two strata or levels of production (“material” and “cultural”, respectively) must, obviously, relate to empirical data, in social science in general, and in economics in particular. Methods of gauging correspondence have been since long established in quantitative terms, but methods which capture the deeper levels of dependence and structural relationships are more difficult to suggest. They will inevitably coincide with methods of assessing and describing such rather general and broad features of social life as are grasped, or pretended to be grasped, in cultural research, such as anthropology, ethnology, cultural sociology and social psychology, as well as in historical accounts, such as those of Foucault or Norbert Elias, aspiring at presenting adequate pictures of entire epochs or social fields.

On the other hand it is hard to prove conclusively from experience alone, that the kind of correspondence or determination sought between two structures is precisely one between “external structures” and “internal content”. An assumption of a methodological nature seems to be required.

Stepping, again, backwards in our discussion, and in the level of precision, one might say that the central points at issue in media policy, expressed by our initial question is

1) to establish whether pluralism in the aggregate sense including the relationships between content and external structure, has increased or decreased, and

2) if the latter is the case, to decide if something should be done.

---

325 The comprehensive study on the criteria for measuring risks to media pluralism performed by a consultant group for the EU will be published in September 2009.
Hopes for exactitude

The problem of pluralism vs. concentration of ownership – as one part of a general structural change - has to be approached both from an indirect, conceptual, “rationalistic”, i.e. non-empirical perspective, that is, analysing terminological issues, and suggesting descriptions based on generally accepted facts. Coming closer to the subject of measuring pluralism or diversity of opinions, views etc. in the media content itself, in relation to external changes, empirical observations will be more important, although it will hardly result in an uncontroversial quantitative “quotient of pluralism”. This is, bold as it may seem, however, the ambition of the European Commission – which seems to be clinging to a kind of ideal of uncontroversial objectivity, even in such rather complex and interest-related matters. The attempt, by the US Federal Communications Commission, to establish a similar kind of index of pluralism, is, according to the scrutiny by C Edwin Baker (2007) a blatant failure, both from methodological and empirical perspectives.

The opposite case holds, however, even less, since it is not possible to deny the feasibility of a solid knowledge base. Many proposals on how to establish market positions of firms, taking into account the strength and position of different actors exist, and the situation of the media firms does not radically differ from other companies in this respect. Thus the media economist Gillian Doyle (Doyle 2002:9) refers to diverse common “concentration ratios” for normal competitive markets. Competition authorities have to consider such situations every day. This does not, however imply that it is easy to obtain an exact measure for the more complex situation covering both content and external structure (inter alia of the market).326

Some way of assessment of the changes in pluralism in the media, both as a whole, and judging by various sectors of the media (radio, TV, dailies, magazines) is frequently brought forward, although it might not be approved by the entire scholarly community, nor coached in unobjectionable terms. As argued by the Finnish researcher Kari Karppinen on “diversity measures and the technologisation of diversity discourse” in an analysis, the point in the discussion on diversity is not definitions but to try to find out practical uses. This technologisation might serve the purpose of “depoliticising” the issue – which is an interest primarily of media controllers. To point at this function does not at all reduce the relevance of conceptual discussions, as argued at length in this study. But it directs attention to the function of a “diversion” move away from aspects of influence, control or power of media owners, distributors and other “controllers” (in the EU sense cited). The proposal (i.e. v. Cuylenburg and v. Loon327) to focus on the role of consumers (and accordingly their choices, as well as responsibilities) instead of on the control of producers/distributors might actually fulfil this kind of ”diversion” function.

In principle there should be neither more nor less prospects of measuring, in a proportional way, the dominance of a particular view in one particular medium, or the entire media supply in a region, than gauging political tendencies at a given moment, which is routine in political polls since decades – just as are large-scale assessments of ideological or cultural attitudes in various populations, in the media, and more privately.328 This kind of measurement will, however, inevitably go beyond official classifications of affiliations or labels of media – the “manifest” level, and has to dive deeper in the presuppositions and underlying layers of texts and discourse.

As in all social and cultural science, research in these issues is a compromise between quantitatively recorded facts and qualitative observations, posing some facts as exemplary, and therefore casting a base for generalisations and predictions, just like quantitative data.

---

326 It is characteristic that in a rather recent report from the Swedish competition authority (Konkurrensverkets rapport nr 2003:2 om konkurrens och samarbete i medierna) on press ownership and competition, all questions concerning the impact of competition structures on content are dismissed as impossible to answer…

327 In Picard 2000.

328 In Sweden, for example, the relations between the media and the political and general attitudes of the population is regularly examined in the so-called SOM-investigations on Society, Opinions, Media. On an international level a wide-ranging poll on attitudes and values has been made in the “World Values Report”, taking into account also religious convictions and ethical values.
Pluralism in the content of cultural products in the sense indicated above does not primarily concern an individual in a society. This may seem paradoxical: if we can measure the level of pluralism in the supply of cultural products to a particular group of persons or in a certain area, why could we not measure it at an individual level? The individual level is, after all, the level where the accumulation of demand is being founded. It is the consumer who, taking a decision on what to buy theatre tickets, daily newspapers or pay-TV, makes the choice. Not rarely reference is made to the absence of a discussion of pluralism from the point of view of the consumer, criticising the debate for being pursued only from a producer’s point of view.

The resolution to this dilemma may be sought in the notion of ‘habitus’, resuscitated by Bourdieu, to denote the entire equipment or competence of a particular person, occupying a position in the cultural field, as a consumer, but also carrying a biological inheritance, possessing an educational background, speaking a language etc. This notion incorporates individual specificities into a social pattern – in a way overcoming the divide between actor and target, producer and consumer.

The presence or absence (supply, vs. non-supply) of a particular product in a social space is therefore not “absolute” – as illustrated by McChesney’s cited comparison of the Internet and a piece of paper in Broadway - but relative to the effort or capacity of the individual to procure itself with that product. Returning, again, to Soviet conditions for a thought experiment: if you lived in Novosibirsk during the Stalin era, it was difficult to be informed about events, due to the extreme limitation of supply of information content, and cultural products being censored in all kinds of ways. But, on the other hand, if you were intelligent, mastered several languages, rich (and brave) enough to possess a short-wave band radio and had sufficient time, you might still, even then, have been able to inform yourself, irrespective of the “market conditions” of Novosibirsk in the 1940s. Obviously you would have to make much greater efforts than your colleagues in England or Sweden at the same epoch.

Besides, Kremlology, the kind of analysis of which most people in the Soviet Union had some experience, gave information. Reading between the lines, drawing conclusions, belongs to personal capacities (habitus), not something provided by the supply system itself. Similarly, the knowledge possessed by any kind of consumer influences the choices available – buying ecological and “equitable” products depends on your own level of information.

The same conditions applied to a Communist coal-miner in the UK, wanting to be informed about the latest standpoints of the Party abroad. There was no supply, in a common economic sense, in these contexts. Still, information was somehow retrievable. This shows that information and cultural production is not just a market in the ordinary sense of being sold and bought, since it could be transmitted also under a non-profit-making intention, e.g. as a political propaganda programme etc. The reference to a “gift economy” provides a framework for this kind of analysis. Cultural production and dissemination obey “laws”, which are not exclusively describable in terms of ordinary market laws. People talk and communicate for free (this is the basis of “deliberative democracy”), also about what they have heard, or read in newspapers, without paying extra to that newspaper... Social life is richer than the life of exchange of goods and services. Communication aspects of social life interplay with, but are not reducible to, economic aspects, and the individual consumer is capable of procuring and providing information depending on her capacities - with smaller or greater difficulties and costs.

The conclusion that pluralism in the content of media production applies to an aggregate level, a level of supply, not the individual level, does not prevent that it is finally the individual who makes the choice to use the supply. This may seem strange, but is not more surprising than the basic property of any communicative system: language is no private business, just as a cur-

329 Today, the same kind of experiment might be ventured for North Korea.
330 This kind of analysis is well described in Solzhenitsyn’s novels ‘The Cancer Ward’ and ‘The First Circle’.
331 The famous observation of Wittgenstein.
rency is without value, if it is not used by many people. Trivially: a couple could not exist without two individuals.

Still, pluralism, though necessarily determined at the supply level, also has a demand side, speaking in economical or quasi-economical terms, viz. an aggregate demand, for example from a socially or ideologically (culturally) identified group. In border-line cases, an individual might be said to *promote* pluralism of supply, expressing diverse consumer preferences – one and the same individual uses newspapers, CDs, books and films. Education and other social conditions (=habitus) evidently influence demand, and the interplay between the aggregate demand and supply is where the notion of *representativity* of supply of cultural production comes into the context.

This is another, perhaps more deep-seated, reason why the proposal\(^3\) to switch over political and scholarly discussion from diversity to access is not only premature but theoretically unsound. Everyone has, in principle, from the content point of view, access to everything, provided you are rich, intelligent, brave and have time enough to spare. Access is something potential, and relative to your “habitus”. If you do not have BBC - then learn English! buy a parabolic aerial, and satellite receiver and: just watch! If you do not have access to ”The Nation”, then learn the same language, buy yourself a computer and read it on the Web, or subscribe… Forget the market!

Access is, reversely, impossible to provide for everything, for example all television channels to everyone on a terrestrial basis. You *have to* buy a satellite receiving equipment to satisfy your wishes. And if you want to look at some local Chinese channel in Finland, well, it would be absurd to say that the important task for media policy is to provide such an access to you, just as it should be to provide you with bookshops offering literature in *all* languages.

All in all, this situation approaches the cited fictive case of the “Siberian consumer”. The conclusion is, again: pluralism, in the relevant political sense, is something that applies to the *supply*, and access is just one aspect of supply – other aspects are the existence of sufficiently relevant or representative products on the market, or in a social context not dependent on market mechanisms (for example a dominant gift economy).

**Empirical data needs**

Having made the choice between supply and demand, the next step in a study of pluralism in the media is to assess the need for material to implement measuring of some kind, proceeding beyond the conceptual preludes.

A major difficulty arises, however, when this idea to “go empirical” is to be realised, simply because systematic and/or statistical data are highly deficient – systems of assembling data are there, on a national level, for the more affluent countries, but as soon as you examine other countries we are only in the beginning of learning the mechanisms of establishing comparable time series of data, even if they cover merely the media sector, in a narrow sense. Going beyond the economically interesting companies and industries, to cultural production in other fields, data collection is even more difficult, except for a few countries with well working public statistical offices.

Some examples of kinds of data required to build up a structure for basic comparisons might illustrate this situation:

1. **Production** structure:
   - Media *owners*, nationally, regionally, locally,
   - *companies* acting in that area,
   - *editorial units* or independent content producers,
   - *distribution* facilities,
   - *technical* facilities available

---

\(^3\) By, among others, Jan van Cuylenburg, cf. above.
2. **Content** structure:
   - the number of divergent views presented,
   - the number of sources of views,
   - the spread of views offered,
   - The ways in which these views are presented,
     - from the point of view of adherents,
     - from the point of view of adversaries
     - critically from outside as well as
     - in confrontation between different views.

3. **The kinds of material** (genre) in which views are presented:
   - newscasts
   - reports,
   - commentaries,
   - current affairs,
   - editorials,
   - entertainment,
   - drama,
   - interactive media production,
   - advertisements and commercials etc.

Some of this information (especially categories 2 and 3) is not generally possible to collect, except by broad categories, probably also coloured in more or less ideological terms. The use of public statistics may be somewhat problematic. Is it at all possible to establish public series of documents or data-bases where controversial classifications – but still rather precise evaluations - like “right/left-wing”, populist, sensational program are employed? And yet, this is precisely what we need in order to establish relevance, system and continuity of our data.

Many of the attempts within the Council of Europe (by way of questionnaires sent out to national correspondents) show that even rather basic classifications, such as fixing a political or ideological label to a newspaper, raises objections. Although everyone knows the general (right-wing) political sympathies of Rupert Murdoch, it would probably be difficult for a public register to classify the political tendency of his products the way a researcher could do. And yet this kind of information is the very point of assembling data on political pluralism in the media. For other parts of cultural production the political label might be less important, but still a number of parameters might be controversial. For the legal system it is evident that any critical classification, such as those made in the sociology of law, criminology and the like, would have difficulties in being introduced in a public information system, including central statistical offices, which are subservient to political governance and authorities. For example: who could imagine that a tax law system be classified, in a public database, as “socially egalitarian”, or “beneficial to the wealthy”?

The operative consequence of this is that a classification of the political pluralism of media - which is the back-bone of any meaningful effort to assess the existence and development of pluralism/concentration of media content - will have to be housed in a forum independent of public authorities, at least directly. This would speak in favour of a kind of NGO-based institutionalised system of classification, similar to the ratings made by Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, Amnesty International or other, more or less controversial, institutions devoted to human rights issues. Only in very flagrant cases could a national public administrative institution or an international governmental be expected to go into processes of this kind. The recent difficulties of the UN Commission on Human Rights are a token of these problems.

Embryonically, a system analogous for the media sector to Human Rights Watch has been erected in the wake of the World Social Forum movements, starting in Sao Paulo 2001, viz. an international network of Media Watch centres. This network is still rather fragmentary and possesses very scanty resources and far from an institutionalised surveillance system for the me-
dia and cultural pluralism. The EU project on indicators of media diversity might play a role for the advancement of such a system, despite apprehensions of its “pacifying” purpose, aired above.

Looking forward this kind of network is not entirely unrealistic, bearing in mind that most countries have some, albeit rudimentary and deficient, system of political opinion surveys, either in departments of political science at universities or at research institutes, or in the private sector, serving political parties, business etc. They share the “dependence conditions” of, respectively, public or private institutions, but demonstrate that data systems for monitoring media pluralism, as well as other parameters of cultural production, are feasible. A basic independence, such as the one traditionally granted to academic institutions, is one prerequisite to the efficiency of such a body.

Compensation and measurement of pluralism
So far the perspective has been either historical or static. The next difficulty we are approaching is related to the processes of an ongoing structural social developments: digitisation, globalisation, mediatisation.

Media structure (however we define it) changes. New media products appear, old disappear, new kinds of technology change the ease of access, old forms of media are used by another (perhaps smaller) kind of audience, or disappear, more or less. Participants in media policy discussions point to the fact that new products, new content in an old product or some entirely new kind of medium, replace or compensate for the disappearance of old products. The term reminds of the traditional economic term substitution. A product might substitute for another product, if it is sufficiently close in its use for consumers to buy it: a single copy evening tabloid or a free copy distributed newspaper (like Metro) thus might replace an ordinary “quality” or “broadsheet” newspaper, although not completely, for all details. TV substitutes for radio, as far as news are concerned, but not in other respects. A frequent issue in policy debates on media pluralism – such as that on “access vs. pluralism of production”, referred to above, is precisely the role of Internet as far as compensatory phenomenon. The Internet substitutes for or supplements the distribution of paper versions of newspapers. Yet defunct newspapers rarely live a second life on the Web – the Web is mostly employed by newspapers as a new form of advertisement and/or form of distribution (mostly for free) of existing, and accordingly, more or less regionally monopolistic newspapers. The situation is at this moment of time still rather unclear of the role, which the Internet plays for newspapers, though a prestigious daily like 100-year old Christian Science Monitor just announced the closure of its paper version…

Technological developments of “convergence” of various media platforms, such as Internet, digital radio and television, mobile phones, computers etc., call for an overview of the entire media spectrum - although it still also makes sense to talk about pluralism in one media branch, such as the daily newspaper industry, particularly if the dynamic aspect is focussed; the concentration process in terms of owners or editors has been debated and is documented over a longer period of time in this sector. However, it is indispensable to account for substitution phenomena also in this context: tasks that were earlier performed by the traditional newspaper industry – such as news and current affairs reporting – are now mainly accomplished by free-copy newspapers, radio or television in the major part of the world, and Internet, leaving the roles of parallel sources, very local news and commentaries to newspapers. So the question to be asked is: are the structural changes in one sub-sector of the media counter-balanced, or compensated for, in terms of pluralism (external, internal), within the remaining media, and over the entire media sector? The answer – to my mind supported by most evidence so far, and also confirmed by analysts such as C. Edwin Baker – is clearly negative. It might even be the opposite case: technological developments, despite its offer of enormous growth of supply have rather, as a whole, favoured

Cf. van Cuylenburg and C. Edwin Baker.
the continued concentration of power over media production content, as far as the politically relevant aspects are concerned.

**The space of opinion – deep structures**

Pluralism - as a feature of the aggregate of content and external structure, is, as pointed out above, however not only a question of **manifest actuality**. As already indicated, it makes sense also to talk about pluralism on a **potential** level. In terms of media production, the concrete manifestations might be compared to the top of the iceberg, the “opinion space”, constituting the underlying mass of opinions, attitudes, affiliations, points of view, presuppositions, discourse patterns etc. The political or ideological landscape of a country might not be very diverse in its ordinary open manifestations (articles, programmes etc.), but still open to new or deviant views being expressed. The same manifest situation might be apparent, on the surface, whenever the media landscape is very uniform, too, but, on the contrary, leaves no openings for deviant and unusual opinions. This is the normal case for undemocratic societies, but also in societies where no formal or legal obstacles exist to pluralism such situations might occur – the typical situation of this kind is a monopoly in a region or over a market section. The difficulty from an analytic point of view is to pinpoint the “underlying” (borrowing Chomsky’s linguistic model), radically different structures of these situations – which on the surface might seem rather similar.

Some examples, not entirely unambiguous, but still illustrative of the complex interplay between the manifest and hidden (underlying) structures might be proposed:

Chomsky and Herman, in their *Manufacturing Consent*, pointed to the media situation of the United States, where, according to their “propaganda model”, the media landscape, though formally being open to all kinds of views, is, or was, dominated by a few right-of-the-centre, government-loyal, ideological and political corporate interests. The consequence was that the space of opinion left few openings to deviant views being heard by more than a scanty minority of people, and thus eliminated their influence on the public at large. Conversely, the media situation of the Eastern bloc countries, such as Hungary or Poland, at the end of the Communist empire in the 1980s, was, on the surface, a rather monolithic structure, but allowed, “underneath” for a rather varied debate on crucial political issues.

The complexity of the cultural production structure may, as suggested, be described by the introduction of the notion of “space of opinion”, to cater for the distinction between the manifest or actual pluralism, and “potential” pluralism respectively. A particular medium, media product or the “mediascape” in a geographical area, a market etc. might be rather “narrow” as far as its spectrum of opinions expressed, e.g. by editors, journalists, entertainers and other participants in media production. This “topological” property of discourse might be compatible both with a general narrow-mindedness of the discourse structure in question, and an openness for a wider spectrum of deviant views. It might even be the case that a very unitary discourse structure is, precisely because of its self-reliance, more open to emerging deviant views than a conflict-ridden, polarized, production sphere, for example where rubberstamps, such as “leftist”, “liberal” or “conservative” are standard for cultural products, thus suggesting, *prima facie*, a pluralist structure, but actually being rather locked up.

The actual reality of these complex interrelationships is correlated to the question of who controls the media, and of the willingness of that “controller” in general to let diverse opinions pass through and be represented. The control might be a question of hidden structures – as illustrated by the rather careful analysis provided by the preparatory documents to the planned EU legislation on media concentration (1992-1999), and controllers might be of various kinds – owners, but also managers, chief editors, political actors, or economical interests (advertisers, creditors, purveyors, technical services providers etc.). The European Union made honourable efforts to extend notions in the discussion on media concentration from mere ownership to a wider spectrum of “controllers” – external and internal.
It could not be taken for granted, as demonstrated in this context, that a strong media controller, such as a big conglomerate with monopolistic positions, or the public sector, also tries to restrict the scale of views expressed. On the contrary, many successful media conglomerates have tended to host a spectrum of diverse points of view, and made a point of it – in economical terms, of “diversifying their output”. Liberal (in a more literal sense than the current polemical use of the word) media groups have often clearly defined editorial policies, but also open their space to other standpoints than their own. This is rather typical for both large media groups like Bertelsmann and New York Times, as well as minor media companies like Le Monde, and La Repubblica, to mention but a few.

The space of opinion is obviously a much more ethereal structure than the one measured in traditional content analysis or other kinds of analytic approaches to market structures.

Still, the heart of the matter of media pluralism might be said to reside in this “topology of opinion space”, at least as much as in the current actual structure of expressed views. The topology depicts the willingness and capacity for housing a minimal spectrum of opinions.

The “shape” of the opinion space, sticking to the topological metaphor, normally changes as one of the actors disappears, e.g. when a newspaper closes. This might occur in two different ways. Either the remaining actors adapt their content in order to catch the audience of the outgoing actor by widening their space, that is by offering possibilities to more views and kinds of opinions than before. That is, increasing their “internal pluralism” of content. Or, somewhat paradoxically, by narrowing it, so as to eliminate extreme views in their media, that is, such that might offend the newcomers... In the first case pluralism gains, or is less reduced, in the second case, it loses, although the overall level of discontent might not be increased... The narrowing down of the opinion space is also, with some justification, often undertaken in the name of objectivity, precisely by eliminating strong feelings... Still, this tendency may be the one that, in the last run, harms pluralism most, since an image of neutrality might simply conceal the fact that deviant or new opinions or perspectives have much less space – not an unusual phenomenon in a structure of proclaimed “independence” of newspapers, such as in the current media structures of the Western world.

Economic factors push in this direction, too – you have to reach as broad an audience as possible if the advertisers should pay you for your space. And extreme (relative to the local or national trends) opinions may harm your image as a “medium for all”...

Such a tendency is reported from the United States (Baker 1994), as a consequence of the monopolisation process in the newspaper sector.

The entry of new media products or media technology in a market – the entry of television in a media market dominated by newspapers and radio, for example, promote the same kind of uniformisation process. Assessing the effect of these kinds of changes, reference is often made to “compensation”; it is claimed that pluralism may even be enhanced after the closure of a local newspaper, since this is compensated by the news and other services offered by national television, local radio etc., which broaden the perspectives beyond a local horizon. In later years, the appearance of Internet has inspired new hopes for compensation. More often than not, however, hopes have been thwarted: local news and political discussions which were taken up in local small newspapers are treated from only one point of view and, and neither television nor local radio have compensated for this loss. In particular local commercial radio has mostly been reduced to centres for distribution of music and publicity, virtually eliminating all employment of journalists. The “talk radio” shows emerging some years ago in the USA have rarely anything to do with news reporting or commentary except from a highly partisan point of view, such as Rush Limbaugh’s

334 I remind of the distinction between internal pluralism and pluralism of content: a pluralism of content could prevail also if a number of rather narrow-minded media products coexist on the market, although each of these products do not at all have an internal pluralism in themselves: pluralism is a concept that applies to an aggregate, not to a single product. Thus if many products have internal pluralism in themselves, this adds up to pluralism in the aggregate sense – but most importantly pluralism presupposes different controllers and different products, not only a few, albeit internally pluralistic, media. The size of the market does of course play an important role here.
been promoted by new communication media and World Social Forum movement of the advent of success of a social structure.

sell, it does not normally happen by itself. The notion of success becomes rather weird for a painter like van Gogh, to widen the space of opinion, this is, on a closer look, not warranted. The same actors, or new conglomerates incorporating the old actors (AOL-Time-Warner, Vivendi-Universal, News Corporation being prominent examples) tend to dominate on the new media scene as well as the old ones. Or, alternatively, new actors, who do not at all focus on the tasks of the media for a politically relevant context, but rather on their role as ordinary profit-making business undertakings, and entertainment, take the command over the new resources, sometimes (in a growing degree, it seems) allying themselves with the old media conglomerates.

By and large, therefore, the entry of new media – such as new cable and satellite television channels, web sites, commercial radio, free copy newspapers etc – do not really have any impact on what we have termed the “space of opinion”. This is the case even if the “smart” active user and consumer, as sketched above, have acquired much better opportunities to seek and impart information. The first break-through of new media for a new, corporate-independent, information structure might at first sight seem to be the Web sites – that is the arrival of Internet. This is, however a rather rash conclusion, as well. Obviously there is a proliferation of public information in one sense, especially since the arrival of more or less “intelligent” search motors like Google, which function as a giant encyclopaedia. You might find information and opinions on practically every subject and from practically every point of view – however deviant and even crazy. But this conclusion is simplistic – and particularly so from a market point of view.

If you buy yourself a computer and an Internet domain you are, theoretically, already in the public sphere – but for the real market. Even if a certain number might find their way to visit your website and read your strong political opinions, the number is simply dependent on usual social criteria – some of which are the ordinary economic criteria, for example the fact that a widely distributed daily newspaper has already established its position on the Web, while a deviant opinion maker has to make her or his way through. The latter has to make her or his way by diverse channels, and using networks already existing, or forming, with great labour, new networks. Just like any formation of social contacts – Bourdieu would have said accumulation of social capital – this is not easier or cheaper or more predictable than any other kind of capital formation.

To use market terms: even if you have a brand new and objectively attractive product to sell, it does not normally happen by itself. A clear illustration is offered from the most traditional cultural production field, book publishing: if you have a book to sell, its success – that is penetration of a social structure - depends on a whole series of factors, for a new author mostly rather predictable. In many cases the reputation of an author and a big publishing company is a guarantee of success. And in some cases, the success is very slow: maybe it only comes after the death of the author. …The notion of success becomes rather weird for a painter like van Gogh,

Internet-based political breakthroughs, such as that of the Anti/alter-globalization and/or World Social Forum movement, occur, but are largely linked to formation of new social networks and other existing movements. Nobody could deny that the success of these movements has been promoted by new communication media – but the influence goes both ways. It is doubt-

335 Castells has a lot to say about new social movements – but does not seem to attribute any crucial role to the appearance and role of the Internet in those movements. By and large I would assume that there is a tendency to overestimate the influence of communication media in this respect – it is a thesis to be proved, an Anti-McLuhan thesis obviously. The messages are much more important than the media, and communication is a force which ultimately rests upon the daily and direct physical contact between people – whether face to face between two individuals or in mass manifestations, military or sports confrontations, in a lecture hall etc.
ful whether this is a phenomenon which influences more than a fraction of ordinary opinion-
formation in existing societies.

Now - how do we measure this space of opinion, in terms of pluralism? The interest is,
both in scholarly and everyday debates, to present viable descriptions of structures and changes.

One idea is to give an account of both the existence and the differences, in terms of “poli-
tical distance” of existing (potentially expressed and expressed) opinions in a given social area,
delimited by geographical or other border-lines. To draw a topological graph, a diagram or a map,
uncontested by a large majority of participants in the media policy debate, is not impossible but
likely to be rather vague and tentative. But, again, in actual reality, an assessment of the situation
in more intuitive terms is what we all do, and justly so, whenever we give a judgement on the
media situation as in some manner related to the opinion space – the “cultural climate”. Again,
Bourdieu’s social field maps are on a general level empirically based accounts which might be
models for the idea of opinion space graphs.

This kind of exercise is, in a general “politological” context, also what is being continuously
done in measuring opinions, evaluating passed or predicting forthcoming election results etc. A
map of the opinion space, preferably a map with several dimensions, is what is aimed at, although
we may not always have the specialised tools for doing a detailed work. Mapping might in this
context be based on, or equated with, monitoring, scrutinising, analysing etc.

Predictions on the development of the opinion space are still more difficult to map, just as
political or strategic predictions in general – but still an indispensable tool for economic planning
of media corporations, as well as political strategies (if any) on a public level. Predictions may be
founded on economic strategies of media actors, for example regarding programme purchase plans.
As I have tried to illustrate by a commentary on a study made by the (now defunct) consultancy
giant Arthur Andersen for the European Broadcasting Union336, this approach does, however,
not say very much on which effect this will have, looking from the point of view of political plu-
ralism. Two other studies for the same expert group of the EBU – also working for the Council
of Europe - tried to analyse the effects of digitisation on the programme content from the point
of view of pluralism and the need for regulation337 of the media landscape to protect competition
and diversity of content. The overriding conclusions of these studies were: there remains a need
for a mechanism of constant and intense monitoring of developments – even if regulation on an
international level could not be judged as the most efficient tool of counteracting undesirable
concentration of power in the media sector.

This all would seem to lead to a rather low-key conclusion, as far as possible measures (in
both senses!) to be applied for the opinion space: It is a question of very uncontrollable and per-
haps in general unmanageable dimension of social life. Though there exist rather controllable and
tested methods of gauging the changes of opinion or general social attitudes, these methods do
not seem to, in themselves, suggest practical planning instruments or interventions on a political
level. Just as economic stabilisation policy methods are subject to political swings of attitudes
(such as going from monetarist principles to Keynesian-interventionist, and back to monetarist
and low-inflation-priority principles) policies to manage the “cultural capital space” (to suggest a
synonym to ‘opinion space’) do not escape from ideological preconceived ideas, even in the
framework of liberal democracies. This does not mean that there does not exist any possibilities
for implementing political action, determined by the democratic ambition for supporting or pro-
moting a framework for media pluralism, but rather that such possibilities will not meet with
wide political consensus. This is demonstrated by the lack of such, effective, frameworks in most
democratic societies, as well as by the restricted legal authority of the instruments adopted sofar
in the international arena – for example the Recommendation of the Council of Europe on
Measures to promote Pluralism in the Media (1995).

336 Cavallin 1999/1.
The media sector is, mostly, in international contexts considered as a policy field separated from the cultural sector. The Council of Europe is, just as Unesco, organized in a way to keep these sectors apart. The Media Division is part of the Department of Human Rights – the central and most prestigious department of the Council, entrusted with the implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights and its executive machinery in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The cultural programme is administered by another department of the Secretariat and another steering committee of Member States – and there is a separate convention to which even non-member states of the Council (and consequently not fully democratic states) might adhere. This status marks the cultural programme as basically non-controversial, while the media programme is part of the political nucleus of the Council, set up to promote the development of democracy and human rights in the part of Europe which was not under Soviet dominance during the Cold War.

Although the media sector, in particular the entertainment interests in television, is the most important and pervasive cultural phenomenon of our time it has been difficult to cross these borders in the international organisations. The European Union has also suffered from the ambiguity in this regard – the cultural area is an area explicitly excepted from the field of legal harmonization but the media field is included in the legal machinery since long. This ambiguity is also reflected in the paragraphs of the article of the Treaty (151) regulating the competence of the Union in the cultural field. Also, on the administrative level, the EU has different Commissioners for culture (education and culture) and media (Information Society and media). This does not reflect the convergence in terms of economic interests in the cultural field, which is concentrated precisely to the area of media, while the other fields of cultural production, such as art and the cultural heritage, have tended to be marginalized, and are beyond the competence of the Union, as far as legislation is concerned, along with education.

Since measures taken in the field of media determine, much more than measures in the traditional cultural policy fields, cultural production in actual reality, this administrative ambiguity acquires a central political relevance. Also, one might conclude that a seemingly theoretical issue like the definition of the notion of culture – a notoriously “academic” issue - might be quite decisive for the conception and construction of a legal machinery, which strongly affects major economic interests. Actually there is perhaps no better concrete argument for the somewhat lofty thesis that “cultural production is overtaking material production” – than the statistical evidence of the growing weight, in most affluent societies, of economic resources being invested in the media and neighbouring sectors, together with the “information industries” in a wider understanding.

Methodologically, the fact that conceptual issues are coming back over and over again, in political debates, as well as in this study, is in itself also an indication of the “Reign of Mind” as an emerging power. Whether you choose Bourdieu’s (rather diverse) definitions of cultural production spheres or Ernst Cassirer’s areas of “symbolic forms”, the social production spheres outside manufacturing of goods and “basic” services like feeding, repairing, etc., acquire an importance which is undeniably growing – despite all difficulties of providing uncontroversial statistical measures.

338 Cassirer (1944) An Essay on Man
339 These difficulties are not only technical but sometimes theoretical – measuring something always presupposes, as said above, a purpose of measuring – thus inevitably a “subjective” element in ever so “objective” quantitative data. And, the difficulties indicated by the debates on “reflexivity” and “positioning” as represented for example in Bourdieu and Foucault and the mentioned work by Winther Jørgensen, will inevitably mark research in/on social phenomena as such – the anthropologist’s dilemma of pretending to escape from his own assumptions, presuppositions and discursive contexts when studying other people’s cultures or life-forms.

Although relativism is often a simple and sometimes even prestigious attitude it is just a matter of philosophical escapism – instead of explaining and describing phenomena, paving the way for understanding them. The natural sciences have, traditionally, been thought to secure another position, protected from the human ingredient of decision and will and capricious intentions, but a quick glance at the history of debates on the philosophy of science suffices to modify this view and inspire to some humbleness also as regards, for example, physics, mathematics, biology etc.
Pierre Lévy, communication researcher in France and Canada, argued in *Le Monde Diplomatique* August 2007 for the establishment of a common system or language for all social and cultural research – as applicable for Internet search engines.
Public policy and diversity – a risk perspective

The observations made so far may seem rather barren, devoid of any new information in terms of practical solutions or new findings of models of measurement. Following up my defence of conceptual or theoretical exercises above, I will try to remedy this shortcoming in this chapter by suggesting some more concrete ideas for a model of how public policy might be linked to measurement of cultural pluralism, focussed on the media. Though these suggestions are in some cases rather simple, they should be understood in the light of the general approach advocating a unified perspective common to both the media and other forms of cultural production. They are, actually in very relevant aspects also treated in the extensive study (in which I took part as a “national correspondent”, providing data on the Swedish situation) which is going to be published soon (September 2009) by the European Commission. Provisional versions have been discussed before the publication and have been available on the Internet (cf. References).

The basic idea is simple; it is taken from environmental policy, combined with some features borrowed from customary international law enforcement in the field of human rights.

Environmental policy might on one hand be regarded as a system for reducing damage already done to the living environment (of women and men), on the other hand a system for preventing such damage. The central notion is in both cases risk, more precisely risk assessment and risk management. Reducing such harm to environment (as it is is generally considered to be) as the disappearance of species of living organisms, could be done by following up consequences and taking compensatory measures of some kind. This might be termed a reactive policy – it is perhaps the most common of all kinds of environmental policy actions such as eliminating pollution, or restoring areas that have been polluted, improving sewage systems etc.

Risk prevention is “proactive” in the sense of ordering human conditions or natural environmental circumstances in a way so as to avoid certain undesirable consequences. Reactive policies, reducing harm to the environment, are normally also policies to prevent further damage – there is no clear border-line between the two aspects. It is a banality to point out that all risks could not be avoided – life is permeated by risk. The point is to systematize and “rationalize” this aspect, aspiring at an increased degree of transparency and, ultimately, security. It is also trivial to remember that a risk is one way of regarding, from a perspective of a group, an individual or some other system of organisms, future events and processes. In a sense, risk is a clearly “transcendental” category: a way of ordering phenomena in order to systematize experience, in order to systematize practical action. Systems of risk assessment and risk management are, generally speaking, the measures adopted to intervene in what is judged to be an undesirable development.

WHAT IS RISK?

Risk has become a subject of much research, involving mathematical or logical game theory, decision theory, strategic and statistical forecasting, etc. specialities ultimately going back to probability calculus and the “measuring of insecurity” or even “hope” in Pascal. This discourse thus stretches from rather human-intentional or even ethereal-religious perspectives to pure mathematical calculi and applied mathematical models employed in a wide range of scientific disciplines, ranging from quantum mechanics to economy. In social science Ulrich Beck’s book on the Risk Society was a trendsetter and one sign of this trend was the establishment in the London School of Economics and Political Science of a Centre for the Analysis of Risk and Regulation (CARR). Actually the prize in economy in memory of Alfred Nobel, distributed together with the genuine Nobel prizes, was awarded to one of the mathematicians behind game theory, John Forbes Nash. Risk and Regulation. Launch issue, attached to the LSE Magazine Vol 11, No 2, Winter 1999.
The notion of risk might be defined in broadly three ways. As in all social contexts caution should however be taken not to overestimate the sharpness of the demarcation between subjective and objective conceptualisations.

The first kind of definition has been suggested above, viz. a “transcendental” approach, that is both “subjective” and “objective”.

A second might sound roughly as follows: “something someone is afraid of” – a “subjective” or psychological definition. We may prefer to talk about apprehensions or fears. This definition, might refer to “someone” as only one individual or a group of persons (human beings, but perhaps also animals or inanimate nature? But is “nature” afraid…?)

The third is perhaps the most established definition – often only “objective” or “real” risks are counted as risks. The risk for a car crash or being struck by illness because of smoking cigarettes may serve as examples.

Under all these possible definitions we find risks that are fundamentally calculable. This property presupposes that risks are identifiable situations or state of affairs (‘Sachverhalte’ in the more adequate German terminology) which, under the assumptions of certain probable developments might lead to damage or undesirable states of affairs or successions of events. The relations between the present actual, objectively describable, situation and the future situation are relations of probability (of a higher or smaller degree, expressible in mathematical terms). Risk calculus, being closely connected to probability calculus, statistics, game and decision theory, while statistics is normally concerned with the relations between a totality and a part of this totality existing now; risk is the relation between something existing now and a future situation.

Since future situations are not, by definition, a finite totality (the future is, at least for all practical purposes, infinite) it is not possible to calculate the ratio of occurrences to the totality of the situations concerned, as we do in as far as past or historical statistics is concerned. We have thus to undertake some kind of extrapolation of the idea of probability in the customary probability calculus sense. This is however not an unknown extension. For instance, all medical epidemiology, or indeed a substantial part of all medical health research, rests upon this kind of extension. If someone has been smoking cigarettes for thirty years, she or he runs a much greater risk, since most occurrences of lung cancer demonstrate a co-variation of the relevant variables. And, since human nature is assumed to be relatively stable, the co-variation is stable. And the risk situation comes out as well calculable. The neat structure described depends on 1) the stability of the human nature and 2) the small amount of variables involved in the calculus. More variables and less stable situations render calculation more difficult but still possible. Game theory has explored complicated patterns: a gambler takes a risk, but hopes to control at least some of the variables.

Risk calculation is involved in most political planning, indeed it might be regarded as the heart of politics as a whole. Major decisions in for example energy policy, war or defence policy and environmental policy are heavily dependent upon risk assessment. Sudden events might however turn over the conditions and variables radically - just to mention the Three Miles Island and Černobyl accidents. Other events might not at all influence major decisions - a serious but never widely known (one could even say: carefully covered up) technical incident in a nuclear plant in a Stockholm suburb in 1973 led to the closure of the plant, but no change in the development of the Swedish nuclear energy programme.
Risk as a new philosophical theme

Risk involves, as illustrated by the three kinds of approaches above, just as probability theory different views on the central notions. Probability involves mostly both a past frequency of occurrence and a projection of coming events (futura contingenta), that is a reasonable expectation. The latter concept is clearly more “subjective”, but might also be subject to calculus, just as the intuitionist brand of logic might be developed into formal systems, related to other formal systems, but using other axioms (and excluding the “law of the excluded middle”, which is not accepted in intuitionist logic). A more intuitive (in many senses) kind of risk calculation takes into account the limits to predictability of human action in general, as well as situations dependent upon human action. Ultimately, the limits of measurability - in terms of exactness (cf. chaos theory and fractal theory) and in terms of variables to be included in the calculus - seem to be at the bottom of this approach. It seems highly likely that this kind of attitude to risk and calculation is more attractive in social science and psychological contexts than in natural science and technology (if the interaction between humans and machines is not the subject of technology concerned).

The sovereign experts in most modern societies on probability and risk in practical life are insurance companies, which have to calculate risks in order to charge premiums and establish profitability. It is characteristic, however, that these companies practise clauses of force majeure – there is a limit to calculability, notably set by “events beyond human control”. Risks as those of nuclear disasters, war, natural disasters, etc. are not covered in the calculi – and usually not necessary to include – just as the time-range of calculation has to be rather restricted: the future glaciations and continental shifts are not relevant, although they clearly endanger most buildings etc. insured by the companies today.

The establishment of the level of risk depends on the establishment of the past facts: if a motorcycle brand has a higher incidence of accidents, premiums will be much higher than for another one. If a disease is more contagious than another one, specific measures of precautions will be taken. In this way the boundary between the two ingredients of risk considerations – measures to repair damages done and measures to forestall future damage – is blurred by the establishment of statistical, past, facts.

These elementary observations on the notion of risk should suffice to point at the difficulties in a policy of media pluralism centred on risk prevention rather than established damage. Still, the very essence of democratic institutions do warrant this choice of strategy. The democratic institutions, such as parliaments, free elections, freedom of expression and assembly, etc., are not material things but social structures, ideal or immaterial in the sense of being human creations, not natural entities. The equilibrium of these institutions, ultimately the survival of them, is dependent upon their capacity to resist destructive influences - that is to foresee damage, in other words, to assess risks. ... And, just as for insurance companies, assessment of future risks is based on knowledge of past damage.

The idea of construction, also the construction of a social structure, is to a certain extent linked with the notion of risk. Each element or relation (constituent, in a wide sense) of a structure corresponds to a risk of elimination of that part. Thus, reconnecting to our main subject, for instance, the function of a modern democratic state is dependent of the mass media and a supply of a certain pluralism of views expressed in these media. In the earlier stages of democratic development – cf. Habermas (1962) – other kinds of cultural phenomena were more important, such as meeting-places for direct communication in cafés, pamphlets, books, societies, orders like the Free Masons etc. Still some forms of this non-mediated direct democracy are practised on the local level. In all these cases, however, the constitutive parts of the actual structure could not be weakened beyond a specified limit, for the structure as such to survive. While a small community might contain a sufficient network of unmediated communication to sustain a genuine exchange of different opinions and settlement of conflicts, this does not hold true of larger

---

343 Cf. the pioneering writings of Isaac Levi during more than 50 years.
communities. One task of democratic risk assessment for communication/cultural production is to identify these critical limits.

Risk management might appear as a somewhat business-inspired term to express the faith that risks are not simply something doomed to come true – that human beings are free to change the fate of the universe, at least in their small corner.…

Both risk calculation and risk management presuppose a belief in rational calculus, prediction, and regularity (and regulation) in social (human) contexts. The latter requirement is to a degree a challenge of the idea of freedom of the will: to be free, after all, means that I could invalidate predictions to a certain degree.

The management of risks is a systematic attempt to predict future developments, and the contemporary army of management consultants is to an essential degree serving the aims of avoiding risks, that is creating security, acting as “midwives”, or nurses to decision-makers: giving them care, confidence and reassurance, hugging them, when decisions are difficult to make. The immense growth of value of that kind of risk services and of security is manifested also by the growth of influence of accountancy and management firms in the economic space. The major actors in this sphere master detailed intimate knowledge of practically every large company in the Western world, also suggesting lines of action or general strategies. The exchange of information between partners of these networks – despite all obligations of discretion between different agents of these networks – constitutes a network of information, integrated into the media industries, a network which is much more effective than the information provided by journalistic or diplomatic channels. It is a flow of information sometimes neglected – but the impact of which is reflected in the circumstance that the financial flows in the world by far surpasses even the biggest economy of the world. Actually, the worn-out cliché of the “information society” might better fit this bloodstream of rarely observed information, which still, as an autonomous, anonymous structure determines the fate of most economic activities of a “real” nature. It demonstrates the distinction between the public nature which is mostly taken for granted when discussing cultural production, and its role in democratic rule on one hand, and on the other, the secrecy of information - and information transfer - which is crucial to most systems of management and governance, in the public, private and civil societies equally. This holds true irrespective of the central role attributed to public opinion as an expression of the “will of the people” in democratic policy discourse.

This distinction between layers of information, and information transfer (communication) may be associated to the well-known model of stratified description of linguistic structures proposed by Chomsky. The “deep structure” of grammar is presupposed as an explanatory device to account for the differences of languages, but also to account for phenomena of meaning identity between phrases of the same language. This structure is, according to Chomsky, not a network of information, integrated into the media industries, a network which is much more effective than the information provided by journalistic or diplomatic channels. It is a flow of information sometimes neglected – but the impact of which is reflected in the circumstance that the financial flows in the world by far surpasses even the biggest economy of the world. Actually, the worn-out cliché of the “information society” might better fit this bloodstream of rarely observed information, which still, as an autonomous, anonymous structure determines the fate of most economic activities of a “real” nature. It demonstrates the distinction between the public nature which is mostly taken for granted when discussing cultural production, and its role in democratic rule on one hand, and on the other, the secrecy of information - and information transfer - which is crucial to most systems of management and governance, in the public, private and civil societies equally. This holds true irrespective of the central role attributed to public opinion as an expression of the “will of the people” in democratic policy discourse.

This distinction between layers of information, and information transfer (communication) may be associated to the well-known model of stratified description of linguistic structures proposed by Chomsky. The “deep structure” of grammar is presupposed as an explanatory device to account for the differences of languages, but also to account for phenomena of meaning identity between phrases of the same language. This structure is, according to Chomsky, not a theoretical or heuristic device but it is in some sense (much disputed!) “really there”, just as the relations and structures discovered in, e.g. biological or physical science. It is discovered, not invented, to polarize, in a crude manner, the ways of looking at the relations between theoretical models and observation. The flow of business information systems might be regarded, in parallel, as the “deep structure” of the economic transaction system in the present world. Real, but “invisible”…

---

344 The largest Six global/US-based accountancy groups, do in fact represent one of the most important kind of newcomers on the new “feudal” scene of policy-makers. Cf. Susan Strange (1996). It may be interpreted as a sign of the time that, in Stockholm, the Price-Waterhouse-Ohrlings-Revenco accountancy group is the principal tenant of the “Bonnier building”, housing the headquarters of the Bonnier group, to which, recently, a magnificent private art gallery/museum has been added – a kind of Swedish answer to Guggenheim…. “Representation”, in the Habermasian, “feudal” sense, could not be better expressed…

345 A century-long issue of dispute and analysis in the philosophy of natural science (at least since Kant), the philosophy of history (at least from Ranke and onwards).
Media concentration as a risk to the cultural environment

Applying this, perhaps rather daring, comparison to the context of structure of cultural production, both to the process of concentration and even monopolisation of decision-making centres of media corporations, and to the cultural production as a whole, from the vantage point of observation of the critical core of the knowledge of transnational business enterprises, the point of view of environmental risk might offer a fruitful perspective. The focal point of debate is, just as in environmental politics, the risk of disparition of species, that is, units of exchange of “information” - genetic in the biological case, political in the cultural context.

In doing so, the centre of gravity of risk management is transferred from reaction to precaution. This should not be taken to insinuate that the entire work of the sectors under scrutiny, as little as the production of polluting manufacturing industries in chemistry, transport, energy or heavy industry, could be classified as something necessarily evil. It does imply, however, that the development of free trade, and unimpaired communication, transfer of services and information also present risks for the democratic control and exercise of power in modern societies, risks that should be somehow assessed and handled. The ultimate risk is, trivially, just as for competition in economic life, that freedom itself will suffocate.

Let us not forget for this sake, again, the positive background to this freedom and its risk: the elimination of superpower arms race (by the elimination of one of them...), and the, at least, reduction of international tensions and risks of total war, has relaxed the necessity for states to protect themselves, by guaranteeing national production of all goods and services, by intensive control of border passages, transfer of goods and services and communication and the like.

The point in using some variety of risk assessment system in media policy – perhaps even as the backbone of media policy in a pluralist and competition-ruled environment - is primarily of the second kind of those mentioned above. That is, the future-oriented variety which aims 1) to identify risks, and 2) to prevent damage, should the risks turn into real events. The reason is simply that media companies that have given up breath or been fusioned with other companies, cannot be recreated, although in the media landscape repairs are possible, through the creation of new production units, subject to the market possibilities open...

The ambition to repair damages already done would therefore come in the second order of priority in media policy. That does not mean that it should not be given attention. On the contrary, the “positive” side of media policy in terms of repairing damage to cultural supply pluralism would be to promote new initiatives, support technological developments that are likely to increase pluralism of supply of content, in the sense indicated above and seek ways to adapt economic systems (taxation, public communication investments), to the needs of a pluralistic media and cultural policy. Obviously, however, such interventions do not necessarily have the desired consequences, in terms of new initiatives being established. Market conditions – and the willingness to consume the new products – determine, necessarily.

“Positive” measures of this kind, aimed at repairing reduced pluralism in the media landscape often intervene in the overall economic systems, and may encounter problems, for example in EU regulation of state support.

Looking at the second kind of risk policies, viz. the future-oriented approach, several roads have been tried and implemented in policies of national governments. The first, and perhaps the nearest at hand for government legislators, has been to consider effective special restrictive regulation only for the media sector. In actual practice this has proven difficult to introduce, for reasons discussed below. By and large effective regulation has to be non-biased and therefore also affect the entire economic activity.

One example of such regulation, which was expected to have some effect on the monopolisation processes in traditional mass media such as press and television, is publicity taxation. If such a taxation is to have a tangible effect on the competition situation it has to be of a dimension to dissuade advertisers to turn only to one content producer, that is, to distribute their

purchases of publicity space on many media outlets. This presupposes that pricing is not unfair – or simply that some taxation measure makes it unprofitable for a producer to dominate a market.\textsuperscript{347}

One kind of restriction, which had a – non-intended – effect on media structure was the war-time rationing of paper, which slowed down or even halted the advertising-monopolisation spiral. But regulations of this rather Draconic nature has of course also other effects – hampering the expansion of private enterprise and putting bonds to competition, and political authorities did not accept to uphold these restrictions, and probably did not entirely foresee, or acknowledge the likely development of the spiral process of concentration\textsuperscript{348}. The dilemma might be expressed as follows in simple terms: either you have free competition in advertising, supporting the independence of media in a market context, but also leading to monopolisation in the long run, or you have strict regulations, hampering the commercial development of some media companies, but preserving competition in terms of content and advertising and offering a freer choice to consumers….\textsuperscript{349} Needless to say which alternative turned out to be the most profitable from the point of view of political debate and pluralism. But it was, to my knowledge, never chosen by any national government in the democratic world.

To go on along the path of the environmental parallel, one might point to the necessity to restrict some species in order to promote a multitude of species in a particular biota. Conflicts of interest are notorious – for example between cattle producers and wildlife interests, or between wildlife preservation interests, tourism or hunting.

In the cultural production context, just as in the biological contexts, future-oriented risk assessment and management should primarily be directed towards the purpose of providing incentives for building up sustainable structures, restrictions being only a supplementary category of measures or a prerequisite to an pro-active policy. Restrictive reactive regulation is seldom the most effective or viable method of public policy.

Opponents to regulatory or policy intervention in the media field tend to take an attitude similar to opponents of environmental action. The US opposition to the Climate convention might serve as an example: only when real harm has been proven, political (public) action is recognized as justified - an attitude which is different from that of risk management. In the climate case, the mere existence of doubt expressed by some (albeit a very small minority) researchers is enough to substantiate, for the administration, rejection of proven harm. In the media case, this would correspond to the attitude that, only when demonstration of a shrinking opinion space has been given and recognized, should intervention to eke it out again be allowed. And, since the measurement of an opinion space is, as discussed, a very difficult matter to agree upon effective intervention, or even any kind of intervention may be opposed. And, since also in this case irreversibility of processes, such as the extinction of kinds or species is a common phenomenon, structural changes will ensue. The species in the biological world would, in the case of cultural production, rather correspond to titles or independent units of media production.

\textsuperscript{347} Progressive taxation is one such measure – it is in actual reality practised in a small television market like the Swedish one, where the dominant advertising free-to-earth company (TV4) which has a practical monopoly in its sector has to pay a fee for the use of its frequency to the State progressively increasing with the advertising income. Since frequencies in the non-digitalized spectrum are very scarce, competition is for practical purposes not feasible – two of the remaining channels being reserved for non-commercial television financed by licence fees by the general public, that is a special tax.

\textsuperscript{348} This is at least not evident, as is demonstrated by the arguments put forward in the preparation of the new legislation of the press in Sweden, where explicitly the risk for monopolisation was accepted as a price to be paid for unrestricted freedom of establishment in the press by one of the leading legal experts involved, viz. the eminent law scholar Hilding Eck.

\textsuperscript{349} Just as in ordinary market economic structures “competition destroys competition” – particularly when you have two markets which interfere, such as publicity and non-publicity content production. The general principle of free competition, formulated by Adam Smith is seldom valid in this case of two interfering markets, neither in markets characterized by strong regulatory interventions – such as defence industry, agriculture, social care, education etc.
Actually some of the arguments proposed remind of the arguments of Soviet authorities commenting the fact that no strikes occurred in their country\textsuperscript{350}. The alternative attitude may be a principle of *prudence*, emerging as the cardinal principle for risk management in the environmental field: unless a product or a development is not proven harmless it should not be licensed or permitted without restriction. In cultural production a parallel principle would rather say that unless it is proven that the opinion space does not suffer harm from the disparition of one product or producer of content, there is an obligation for the public authorities to seek solutions to preserve pluralism.

Given the difficulties of achieving precise and numerical measures of media pluralism, in terms of political or ideological attitudes, and still more for the more general “opinion space”, and the rather rudimentary stage of work towards this goal, it is, however, difficult to imagine such a corresponding principle for cultural production in actual political reality. There is one slice of a similar regulation, nevertheless, in the German constitutional principle of an obligation for the state to supply basic information to the citizens\textsuperscript{351}.

The most convincing argument against the general application of such a principle would be the necessity of granting a maximal freedom to cultural production as a whole. A “prudential principle” should therefore prevail on an overriding structural level, refraining from intervention in the political or other sensitive content of the media product. In this form there exist a number of measures that might qualify for the status of such prudential regulation.

Just to mention a few cases, where an application of a possible “prudential” examination process, looking at the media structure from a risk perspective, might be envisaged:

- fusions above a certain level of market share (already existing in many countries, and discussed within the EU, though cancelled),
- expansion of advertising, both to new media sectors or products, and in existing media, such as advertising slots, interruptions of programmes in television, the extension of advertising space allowed in newspapers enjoying public support measures,
- introduction of new sponsoring schemes in public broadcasting
- extension of commercial activities (programme trade, sales of products) of public or public supported producers – in the media and other cultural production spheres
- revision of advertising regulations, such as the extension of product placement
- the (re)classification of newspaper material as commercial or non-commercial \textsuperscript{352}.

It is, as the debate in the European Union on a possible regulation of media company competition shows, overwhelmingly clear that no acceptance of such a principle is likely to be voluntarily offered by any of the major media actors, in the Western world. Even small and precarious media editors and companies tend to join in with the general reluctance to regulation, albeit on this rather structural level – despite quite a respectable record in some cases in terms of some interventionist action post-poning the monopolisation process in the daily newspaper sector\textsuperscript{353}, based on risk considerations.

This seems to be a consequence of general solidarity of media professionals, which seems to overrun fears of monopolisation and waning competition. From an external point of view, or at least a position in the cultural production field at some distance from the media production itself, this solidarity appears to be rather heroic and romantic, but moribund, just as the attitude from some news media of refusing state support – ultimately leading to their death. In some con-

---

\textsuperscript{350} The arguments run as follows, by and large: “Since the supreme power of the SSSR is held by the party of the workers, there is no reason for the workers to go on strike – it would mean to fight against yourself!”

\textsuperscript{351} *Grundversorgungsauftrag*, cf. for example the report of the North German Broadcasting service (NDR) [http://www1.ndr.de/ndr_pages_std/0,2570,OID280934,00.html](http://www1.ndr.de/ndr_pages_std/0,2570,OID280934,00.html) Nov 2006, on how this obligation should be implemented.

\textsuperscript{352} In small provincial newspapers that enjoy state support in Sweden a proliferation of TV and radio programme tables and family congratulation photos is quite remarkable – these texts normally qualify as editorial material, not commercial text, although they are patently included for the benefit also of those who count the centimetres of editorial text in proportion to commercial texts in the support grant agency…

\textsuperscript{353} I, understandably, refer to Scandinavian experience – Sweden and Norway.
texts it may be reasonable, but if the same kind of attitude should be occupied by other sectors of cultural production, such as education or scientific research, or art, it would, in most countries of the world, be regarded as just a dream or a “dogmatic slumber”, to formulate a travesty of Kant.

The attitude in dominant media company executive circles is obviously quite different, just as in the dominant energy producers to the climate convention. The, still, leading “media tycoon” of the world, Rupert Murdoch, was the most active lobbyist, by way of the framework of the European Publishers’ Association, against any EU regulation on media concentration, and has also strongly influenced British regulation of media company mergers and expansion, for the benefit of his own interests. Another example is the most prominent Swedish media executive, former president of the World Association of Newspapers, Bengt Braun. Being asked by journalists which market share would justify legislation restricting ownership of newspapers, he held that any public intervention in the market against a concentration under 50 % of a national newspaper market would not be justifiable. Most of the chief editors of dominant media also tend to express views similar or identical with those of their employers or owners, sometimes in blatant contradiction to their own inherited journalistic ideals of pluralism.

Since, in most countries, newspapers are mainly acting under market division conditions (monopolistic competition) – which means that a local paper has a very dominant position or monopoly - local market dominance is, however, often much higher than 50%, although dominance in a larger national territory is lower. So-called “national” newspapers are mostly rare, in most markets - Britain is an exception, along with a few other countries. Competition for advertising in the newspaper market is thus very scanty for most editors – which does not mean that other media might compete for advertising budgets.

Arguments such as the possibility of buying newspapers from other places or the nationally distributed newspapers, looking at television or listening to radio, using the Internet (where most newspapers are offered completely or in part), reading magazines, briefly, utilizing some other source of information will always be offered, from these monopolistic firms. But, this is the very essence of monopolistic competition. In addition, this kind of argument transfers the responsibility for pluralism from the suppliers to the consumer level – a level where, as I have suggested above, pluralism by definition always pertains, subject to various conditions (money, knowledge, intelligence, personal courage etc).

Now, the resistance against intervention, based on the damage-first criterion, from the side of (most) media producers is, naturally, intended to weaken the case of the other camp. This camp has, as is well known, taken up the challenge and provided a rather impressive record of damage caused. Most debates start at some point where an abuse of monopoly has been brought to public attention, and include claims to have quite conclusive proofs – readings of Bagdikian, Chomsky, Herman, and McChesney in the US, as well as critics in the general public debate in other countries confirm this pattern. But, although nobody disputes the fact that concentration of media power or monopoly in the non-democratic context causes great harm to pluralism, indeed turns it into mere fiction - the argument of media controllers or owners seems to imply that a democratic society (or capitalism in a democratic society) in itself rules out any real danger, notwithstanding monopolistic competition developments or pure monopoly. The argument from

---

354 In the case of national newspaper markets only Ireland and Austria have figures approaching the levels discussed here. The situation is often the opposite for television, where duopoly is common. In the Swedish newspaper market Braun’s group (Bonniers) is safely under this limit. In the subscribed newspaper sector the group has a monopoly only in two small towns, otherwise it is commercially dominant but has competition (Stockholm, Malmö). In the single-copy sale sector there is a duopoly, Bonniers having incorporated two smaller newspapers into the larger Stockholm-based Expressen, and Schibsted having taken over control of the largest, Stockholm-based but nation-widely sold, Aftonbladet.

355 In the Swedish case, the only really “national” daily newspapers are the remaining two (Stockholm-based) evening tabloids, single-copy sold. Even the two leading morning papers, also based in Stockholm, have very small market shares outside the Stockholm area, though for one of them Svenska Dagbladet, conservative and owned by the Norwegian Schibsted group a rather large share of its total circulation is thinly spread over the entire national market.
the opposite point of view is again rather simple, viz. that regulation and policy measures must be designed to avoid damage and not to repair damages only.

This kind of discussion will, sooner or later, get into a deadlock, characterized by participants exploiting ambiguities in the terminology – as hinted above.

The dispute might be compared to the, more or less philosophical, dispute in criminal jurisprudence over the effect of law. Though most people tend to believe that a restriction or a prohibition – and punishment - reduces the total level of damage caused by criminal actions, nobody believes that it completely eliminates crime. Paradoxically, a law shows its irrelevance if nobody breaks it. The die-hard proof is very difficult to obtain, and hence most theorists also have a second line of argument, viz. the more philosophical argument that punishment (revenge) is part of any system of moral judgement involving personal responsibility.

In the case of environmental legislation, as mentioned, although there is rarely a total consensus on environmental harm, a certain zone of security is usually claimed from authorities and a requirement from the actor to guarantee the harmlessness of some action often set up. The recent controversies in the European Union over environmental regulation, however, show the difficulties to gather consensus on an international level on a principle of prudence.

My simple conclusion from this analogy is that the pluralism of the “media environment” should be subject to similar protective principle of action. This does not imply protecting the media environment against “harmful content” in general (“mental poison” etc.). God help me, no! The analogy could not be stretched this far. It expresses rather a necessity for a conscious political approach to the conservation and development of the pluralism of the cultural production landscape, as much as that of material production and natural environment.

Fundamentally, this is a variety of “risk management” policy. We know that all risks could not be avoided, indeed that the dynamics of a society depends on the willingness to accept risks. But we also know that some risks should be particularly monitored, and that some risks have to be, even at a high cost, reduced.

One might, finally, in a note of resignation, of course ask, whether the risks to democracy, following from a loss of or a gradual significant reduction of media pluralism, is a manageable issue. The answer is, as in environmental policies, yes, but it requires a set of different measures, and a systemic coordination which has so far been rare in almost every country of the world. To give a negative answer seems to be equal to saying that democracy has had its time, and that it is not compatible with the economic development taking place. To see how some aspects of such a management policy might look like is the task of much reflection - and probably trials and errors. This study aims at giving its contribution to that task.

Steps in risk management

1. The basis of a risk regulation regime as the backbone of a risk management system, must be continuous risk assessment and monitoring. That requires continuous collection and analysis of data of various kinds, quantitative and qualitative. Some legal fundament is necessary, but not necessarily a very detailed set of regulations. A minimum requirement is that contradictions in legal regimes are eliminated. Most states have, as a matter of fact, quite contradictory regulations – where for example one promotional measure in media policy is outweighed by legislation with quite adverse effects. Competition law might for example be rather general

356 The current president of France, Nicholas Sarkozy, even made a slogan of the principle in his electoral campaign: “There is no better prevention of crime than sanction!” To illustrate from quite another sphere of cultural production than legal norm production and practice, viz. poetry: the essence of poetry is precisely the break of rules – at least in the theories of structuralist and formalist aesthetics (Shklovsky, Jakobson).

357 The minimum level of restriction is in this case taken care of by ordinary legislation dealing with the protection of personal integrity etc.
and rigid, but does not counterbalance the effect of an unbridled freedom of establishment of media enterprises, including the unrestricted right to acquire competitors etc.\footnote{358}  

2. Specific risk management for \textit{cultural production} raises at least three difficult issues for the legal regimes envisaged:  
1) the level of public control,  
2) transparency of the media and  
3) the implementability of regulations.  

3. \textbf{Measurement of pluralism} levels comes in at all these levels and hence a patient and successive elaboration of existing criteria and, in some cases, even numerical standards of assessment of pluralism of media,  

4. \textbf{Public documentation} of the results of these assessments, be it in the form of yearbooks, newsletters or web sites are necessary in order to set up a stable system.  

In regard of all the complications of measurement of pluralism in content, and even more so in the “space of opinion” as outlined in this study, it seems clear that the assessments will not be controversial, nor be exclusively the outcome of formal legal procedure. They will inevitably be political in their character and effects, and, probably because of this, will mostly have to be established by researchers, institutes and media professionals, not elected political institutions or their subordinate authorities.  

Risk and regulation, two sides of the same coin?  

In most situations when people talk about media concentration and amassment of power in the media or other cultural fields - concentration being seen as leading up to a reduced space of opinions, measured or assessed according to some, quantitative, quasi-quantitative or qualitative - perhaps rather intuitive - method, the issue of \textit{regulation} is brought up. I have referred above to a “risk regulation regime”.  

Regulation, in a formal legal understanding, is usually seen as the most appropriate and effective method of catering to certain needs and, negatively speaking, forestalling certain risks. Regulation is often also the most obvious way for political action by parliamentary assemblies, whose prerogative is usually law-making. An old Norse saying sounds: "Land shall be built by law", and contemporary politics, particularly in Social Democratic circles, is heavily concentrated on the role of law as a means to establish “People’s power “. In a somewhat surprising manner right-wing constitutionalism and legalism, and left-wing ambitions to transfer power to collective institutions from private enterprise is supported by the ever-growing army of lawyers dominating political institutions, in particular the European Union, the main occupation of which is precisely the institution of new regulative instruments.  

\textit{Law-making presumes law-breaking}  

But obvious does not mean effective, nor efficient. Apart from the general paradox that law-making presumes law-breaking, regulation, as a matter of fact, despite its central role in discussions on public policy and for mitigating apprehensions for a shrinking opinion space, has proven, by and large, so far to be rather inefficient. Regulation, as an expression of the principles of a society, plays an important part in the skeleton of it, but it is neither the only, nor perhaps even the “fundament” of it, despite the Norse saying \footnote{359}. Democratic society is rather built upon itself in a peculiar manner: if there is not a democratic “confidence structure” in a society, that is an “ideal” or immaterial social structure, close to the notion of “citizenship” advanced by Robert

\footnote{358}{Competition law in Sweden conflicts with constitutionally guaranteed rights of complete freedom of establishment in the press, including an unconditional right to purchase existing companies.}

\footnote{359}{A “post-modern” challenge for the reign of metaphors might be the appearance, in construction technology, of building methods starting with the roof, not the fundament!}
Putnam (1996), regulations and legislation do not help very much. In other words: the public sector presupposes the civil society. On the other hand, a democratic confidence structure also, to some extent, must always include some level of explicit expressions, be it in terms of written regulations, or common law. This circumstance tends to corroborate the general “idealistic” approach of this study – as a matter of fact the backbone of democratic society is not a formal constitution but its fundament in terms of a cultural product, resulting from a political and social convention in a particular society.

So far there is no systematic evaluation of European or American regulation against media concentration, and still less a reliable evaluation of the effects on that more ideal level referred to here: pluralism of media content (and quality, as defined in various ways). But at least some sources indicate that even the most detailed regulations, such as the American, do not offer much resistance to a political determination to adapt to corporate economic interests. This point of view is even more explicitly put forward by the US critical media analyst group ramsci, illustrating the fact that legal action or legal structures are quite justifiably included in the sphere of cultural production. Berlusconi’s grasp of the media sphere in Italy was not at all hampered by the legislation of a detailed nature introduced in that country, on the contrary. Many signs indicate that, generally speaking, the issue of power over cultural production is losing its current attraction to policy makers on the state level. Despite some proposals in the European Parliament, the issue seems to be rather low range. Legislation has, actually, on the national level rather tended to promote than reduce concentration of ownership (Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, UK). The conclusion that existing legislation is rather an expression of political rhetoric than political will to change conditions seems warranted.

This is not to deny that regulation, in business as well as in criminal contexts, has some effects, but we are better served with some humility in predicting the outcome, rather than taking for granted that the adoption of a law really changes society. Legislation is one but not the only, and not even always the most effective, way of changing a social situation. I have in other contexts cited Prof. Gerd Kopper’s notion of a ‘drama of expectations’ as an expression of the interplay between legislators on freedom of the press and the media actors themselves. Only one part of the arena of policy-making is legislation or regulation in the formal sense. Legislation might be considered as an expression (or even a “narrative” combined with a prescriptive “perlocution” – we are in a cultural arena) of policy makers representing a majority of voters or the general public. But it is in no way a prediction, combined with a guarantee of success. Finally, social risks have to be met by a cluster of political measures, one of which is regulation.

Consequences

A collective or social risk, such as that of loss of pluralism, in the content and in the production structure of the cultural sphere, has doubtless to be met by political public action, although common decisions by individuals and group pressure might be important in urging for public ac-

---

360 The reverse also holds – a capitalist enterprise structure, which may be regarded as part of civil society, (Gramsci might shudder in his grave!) cannot function without some kind of support of a regulated behaviour in terms of norms, either codified in written law or established in customs respected in society. Joseph Stiglitz has underscored this interdependence.

361 This kind of judgement seems to be contained in the report on digital television presented to President Clinton in December 1998.

362 Extreme cases of legislation that are not even believed by the legislators to have any but ‘representative’ effects, that is serving as a token of the vigour and importance of a political actor, are to be found in most democratic states. The most obvious ones are perhaps to be found in the US, where in some cases - such as the Communications Decency Act - already at the signature of the act all the involved parties must have known that the courts will invalidate the law, at least partly. This kind of showpiece legislative action is said to become more frequent, as the real power of legislators are reduced. (An argument advanced by The American Civil Liberties Union in October 1994 to a group of Swedish visitors).
tions. Initiatives like “Media Watch” or other “observatories” of media and culture represent such pressures. Public action is however not necessarily only regulative action—in a number of cases also economic and educational or informational measures might be as important as formal regulation. In both cases the driving force has to be political will—which seems to be rather lukewarm, as suggested already, in dominant political circles.

And, quite naturally, “feudal” policy makers in the sense indicated above, viz. corporate magnates and managers in the media and communication industries, are generally pressing in the opposite direction, that is for the abolition of all kinds of restrictions, in the name of liberalizing or deregulation of services and financial flows. As already stated, these “feudal authorities”, to borrow Susan Strange’s terminology, have been quite successful in changing the agenda.

A token of this agenda modification (corroborating the thesis that conceptual battles are significant in the field of cultural production!) may be the increasing use of the more positively sounding term ‘consolidation’ of enterprises (markets etc.) in the media industries, instead of the rather negatively loaded ‘concentration’, despite the different ranges of those terms—consolidation is a wider notion than concentration, since it also covers the overall development of successful business results, independently of fusions and expansion.

Research efforts to find criteria for evaluating the degree of concentration (or lack of diversity/pluralism) in the content of the media (the traditional media newspapers, radio and television primarily), may implicitly suggest a basis for policy action. This basis will not automatically produce the desired results, neither the contrary of course, but actually the “force of knowledge” might in itself be an efficient factor in policy-making. If there is a wide-spread research corroborated public awareness both of the structure of ownership of cultural production facilities, the general content profile from a political point of view, and the risks inherent in a concentration of control, this awareness might in itself be a powerful tool to discourage undesired fusions or expansions of a dominant actor. Public debate has in several cases proven to have this effect.

One might even use the term ‘market mechanism’ to point at the power of public strategic knowledge of the relations between, say, the ownership (control) of media enterprises and the pluralism in the actual content of the media as well as pluralism of the opinion space.

In some detail other methods, linked to formal regulatory approaches, will be discussed below. The task to promote pluralism is a matter of a multitude of methods, woven together into a strategy.

‘Mainstreaming’ is a notion brought in for different policy areas—also for the arena of media policy. It means that a political priority should be brought into all different political sectors, rather than separated as a particular field or sector. The emblematic example is probably policies for equality between the sexes, where sometimes the notion of mainstreaming is an excuse for not taking action, sometimes a real ambition not to relegate action into a rather isolated area, seldom given any budgetary priority. The concept is risky, because of a certain inflation in its use—every interest might aspire to be put in the centre of all political action. For media policy, applying this strategy for the issue of pluralism would mean that the securing of pluralism (of content, in the specified sense) is the overriding task of media policy, and should permeate all its parts, as well as adjacent or other relevant policy areas (such as arts, competition, taxation, industry). If media policy rather becomes, instead, as has been the case in the European Union recently, subordinated to the interests of promoting “growth” in a crude and unspecified sense, for example in the “audiovisual industries”, the primary objective of promoting pluralism will necessarily suffer.

363 Cf. for example Doyle (1998). An exception is the Swedish competition vocabulary, which recently has been standardized to use the notion of concentration for a number of phenomena earlier denoted by different terms.

364 A Swedish example is the resignation of the dominant Bonnier group to take over the second Stockholm morning daily, in view of disapprovals in the public debate, reinforced by declaration of the then minister for Cultural Affairs—who had no legal authority whatsoever in the matter.

365 Wikipedia (2007) defined as follows: Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.
The process of concentration of traditional media and communication industry ownership in the private sector (and the privatized ex-monopolies), does not indisputably lead to reduced pluralism of content in the media sector as a whole, though involving risks. The arrival of new media channels opens new developments for “compensation”, and the remaining media (both private and public or state-owned) declare a higher ambition of increased “internal” pluralism. The lack of consensus on the description of the actual situation does not prevent a case for a consensus on a lower level of ambition. This consensus could be formulated as follows: we face a risk of a reduced pluralism of content, a risk which is not imagination, but a real risk, as real as the risk of nuclear disasters or the extermination of species of the organic world, or the carbon dioxide roof, ozone hole etc. The most common case, viz. a risk for an armed conflict, is mostly a sufficient reason for spending considerable sums on military systems aimed at preventing the dangers ensuing from this risk, mostly without any serious troubles in convincing the electorate of the necessity of it.\textsuperscript{367}

The dimensions of representativity

Despite the lack of consensus in political debates it seems, intuitively, unlikely that the processes of monopolization or oligopolisation of the press and other media should not have lead to a shrinking space of opinion in the media. The opposite assumption would have to deny the influence that ownership and control over economic enterprises have over the market and the activities of individual actors. This amounts, however, to a denial of the doctrine of ownership being instrumental to economic dynamics – viz. capitalism as such. Though in some situations the complexity of human action and its motives vary – but as a general assumption it is not tenable. It would also actually challenge criticism against state-control over media, go counter to the fundamentals of liberal market economy, and, precisely because of this, paradoxically, also opens for a planned economy.

A possible counter-argument would be based on a reasoning of degree, that is that some reduction of market diversity could be accepted, but not beyond a certain limit, where incitements provided by private ownership, profit aspiration, competition and responsibility for property disappear. The case might even be proposed that the limit is, simply, two actors in a market. But, again, obviously these two actors might, according to the original theory of free market economy in Adam Smith, simply divide the market between them, and thus eliminate competition. This is, very often, the case in the media markets, although borders between markets may not always be clear-cut: newspapers compete, a little, with television, the Web etc. But by and large this is marginal.

In assessing whether a shrinking of a particular opinion space is really the case, one has, however, also to take the general climate of opinion or of culture into account. A shift to the left or (as at present) to the right in public attitudes in political or ideological matters will also move the space of opinion in the media. That is, opinions further to the left will have greater difficulties than before to be expressed and received. And the reverse, should trends change. The general cultural climate does not only pertain to a small “intellectual” elite, whereas the “space of opin-

\textsuperscript{366} The notion of ‘real risk’ is to some extent a contradiction in terms, since a risk is not the same as the “real” situation occurring – “corresponding” to the risk. This notion refers to the “objective” variety of risks, described above. It is part of the difficult logic/ontology of modalities, specifically possibilities, already studied by Aristotle.

\textsuperscript{367} In these days the most obvious example is the willingness of the United States Congress to agree to the huge spendings of its occupational forces in Iraq – spendings that by far exceed the costs of most social systems and development programmes, and, for three months, the entire budget of a rather rich country like Sweden. The extraordinary and to external observers stunning unanimity of both political and media actors in the US, over the attack on Iraq – despite obvious insecurities and lies by the leaders of the attacking nations, viz. G. W. Bush, A. Blair et compagnes, proves the flexibility of public opinion and its willingness to follow its leaders, reecting them for new terms of office, even after the disclosure of their blatant lies. The explanation is mostly given in cynical terms: it is the history of the victors that is told, and the losses of lives of the vanquished do not count, neither in Iraq, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Dresden, Hamburg, nor in the ethnic cleansing of the 12-13 million inhabitants of the German former east territories.
ion” primarily might be taken to concern the expressions of public opinion in cultural production. Incongruence between the two (“climate” and “space”) will express the representativity, or the lack of it, between those two spaces. Normally, but by no means necessarily, the elite is expected to differ from the views of the “common man” – usually by being less conservative or more radical, open to new ideas. This does not prevent the elite from being, also normally, more conservative in the sense of being anxious to preserve privileges and not letting rebellious cultural expressions interfere on the basic structures of power, expressed in terms of adherence to inherited canons of aesthetics, knowledge, education etc. Bourdieu’s studies has provided lots of evidence to this double-speak of some of the contemporary elites. When the gap between the cultural climate and the opinion space becomes too big, an adjustment may take place: the cultural climate changes, and the opinion space alters its form. The temperature of the cultural climate might be gauged by some symbolic indicators – e.g. values adhered to by larger groups in society. Abortion, homosexual marriage, equality between the sexes, immigration may be some recent watershed indicators (in Europe), or, in earlier decades, capital punishment, welfare state obligations etc., which have slipped from a divisive role to a factor of social consensus. In those processes cultural production activities in the “opinion space” preceded and contributed to a change of the cultural climate at large.

To come back to our topological metaphor, this “climate” and the opinion space might develop in the direction of either becoming more uniform in itself or taking a turn in a particular direction (to the right, in the more recent socio-cultural trends, most people would say). These processes might, as is customary in topological discussions, be illustrated by depictions of spaces, taking different forms, moving in and out of each other, overlapping, being contained in each other etc. Their mutual relationships is much more complex and dynamic than the traditional metaphor of “reflection” or “mirroring” suggests – if “reflection” is used, one has, at least to consider all the kinds of different mirrors which exist… The figure below is a primitive way to represent how these two topological units – depicted only in two dimensions – relate to each other, and move as such in a certain direction. All this is, of course:

The “climate” is mostly expected to be reflected in results of general elections of democratic societies. It is important to note, however, that the observations on cultural climate or space
of opinion is in no way only pertinent to democratic societies – on the contrary, authoritarian or
dictatorial societies are characterized by the same movements.

This point introduces, literally, another dimension in the entire subject of measurement of
content, as far as pluralism and quality are concerned. The space of political (religious, philoso-
phical, ideological etc.) opinions is relative to the wider cultural climate, surrounding it or being
more or less congruous with it. That is, this space develops or changes - notably in parallel or in
another kind of relation - which theoretically could be mapped onto the expressions in the media
(or in other kinds of expressions).

The media might be regarded as one form of expression of public opinion, but they are also
forming the same opinions (“setting the agenda”, “mediatisation”, cf. above). Business interests
have in later years, in a much more deliberate manner than before, invested (literally) in the media
as a factor of forming opinion than before. This is demonstrated by the mushrooming of lobby-
ning organisations, media trainers, information experts etc. – in itself one of the key factors in the
“culturalisation” of economy. Important resources towards winning public opinion have been
invested. And, generally speaking, these efforts seem remarkably successful, in the sense that the
opinion space looks “bluer” today than thirty years ago. And it is to be expected that measure-
ments of content also show that the space contains less differentiation of views, from the
spectrum of the political tendencies, and a weaker left than before. Opinions expressed are rather
varieties of liberal or conservative views and the traditional left side of the political spectrum
tends to adopt more liberal views than before.

And yet: it is not easy to discern cause and effect in this process – to find evidence for di-
rections of the change here, or, in other words, whether structural changes are causing changes in
the opinion of space, or the reverse – or, which is the trivially probable answer: both ways. Some
political trends of the opinion space during one period have simply vanished, but did they be-
come spurious or marginalized, “by themselves”, because of other structural changes, or rather as
“cultural climate changes”. The egg or the hen?

In the media context, changes in the “cultural climate” accompany concentration of con-
tr ol of the traditional media, though argued from many sides, “compensated”, by “inner”
plurality or new media outlets, or the expansion of some media (broadcasting) supply (see
above).

Representativity of different opinions would then, consequently, not have suffered loss
from this change in the cultural climate.

In view of the rather polarised judgement of the development one might ask: Is there any
possibility to transform this kind of conceptual ring into a spiral – that is, to advance recognition
of some confirmed facts and some unity of description?

For the daily press the case seems to be simple in most European countries: a smaller or
narrower space of opinions is represented today than 30 years ago. This has affected both the
more clearly right-wing as well as the left-wing press. The result is that the political identity of
most newspapers is much less explicitly stated, although a kind of liberal-centre-right trend is
quite dominant, often under the label of “independent”.

The difficulty of establishing a more exact, uncontroversial mapping between the opinion,
in the more dispositional or potential sense of “openness to diverse views”, and and the actual
opinion space prevalent or expressed in the media is perhaps insuperable, but approximations,
albeit mostly subject to political controversy, are feasible. To give a precise judgement on the re-
presentativity of the present media outlets in their totality seems difficult to sustain from impartial
studies alone. The difficulties inherent in the interplay of various layers of opinion, expressed and
“just held”, with the “climatic changes” are considerable. The immense variety of the Internet
also means that every opinion and point of view, ever so eccentric, might be expressed, without
being censored, but perhaps nearly unnoticed by everybody. The notion of representativity itself
seems to presuppose that there is some selectivity mechanism channelling views from a broader
population to a group of representatives. But if this selectivity is about to disappear, in the era of
blogs, mailing-lists, web-sites, communities – what use is there for representativity? Nobody could deny that the Internet has made it much easier for millions of people to select their information – making them much more independent of the supply of the market. But – recalling McChesney’s scornful judgement of the Web, based on the economic and structural realities of the media markets - do the notions of representation, and representativity, not still retain their rightful position in the analytic space?

The point...

Risk management as a strategic choice for public attitudes to pluralism in cultural production is a rather uncontroversial option, for example testified by the approach in the EU study of indices on media concentration. One might even have a slight optimism that politically opposing camps could agree on this – just as in the cases of agreeing (at least in general terms) on defence spending or constitutional reform. For the latter case most political actors realize that they might lose their power to the adversary in the next general election, and, consequently, have an interest in not blocking a constitution, which caters for a broad spectrum of interests, even if one camp dominates at a particular moment of legislation or constitutional reform.

This position may be described as a “reconciliatory neutralizing” position, since, irrespective of when and how the space of opinions is moving, a mere trend of uniformisation of opinions within the media should trigger, for all political currents, an awareness of a need for monitoring media space. This should invigorate the public ambition to keep track of strategic moves of actors likely to advance their positions to dominating media markets, and at least to consider the need for contravening such moves, either by strengthening the weaker actors, by some kind of structural, “non-content-interventionist”, measure, or by encouraging new initiatives, which are not controlled by dominant actors.

The particular character of these new initiatives, on the other hand, must, and there is near to complete unanimity on that point in most political camps368, be politically balanced and subject to the restrictions of the requirements of democratic legality. As experience from various subvention systems shows, this is a delicate issue. It could not be interpreted – on the contrary – to say that any new initiative benefitting from a public structural intervention should be “neutral” in the sense of not expressing political positions. In the press sector, most newspapers, whether in need of public support or not, have a political or ideological colouring369. Obviously any system which subsidises all newspapers would be counter-productive, which means that “positive discrimination”, or “affirmative action” has to be accepted viz. a “neutralizing” effect in regard of publicity income to media. A neutrality of a support system is a prerequisite both for its being accepted by public opinion and from the point of view of the EU rigidity on state support. The latter is of course, strictly speaking, impossible, since precisely the “free and unhampered competition” is the problem in media markets, where publicity income fundamentally distorts the relation between the buyer and the seller of “content”. In actual practice this must imply a system which is necessarily a compromise between an ad hoc regulation directed towards the “victims of market distortion”, and an impartial legal subvention mechanism. This, furthermore, also reveals the difficulty of drawing a borderline between media policy and cultural policy, whether nationally or on the EU level. The idea of regarding media as an ordinary field of business activities – and therefore not falling under Article 151 of the Treaty – maybe realistic from the point of view of international trade and the growing economic role of cultural production. On the other hand it is – I should even dare to say – in reality, if not in legal letters, incompatible with the safeguarding of human rights in as far as it concerns freedom of information. Article 10 of the European Con-

---

368 One representative expression of this position is found the Recommendation on Measures to promote pluralism in the media adopted by the Council of Europe (R 1995:1) – actually the only more detailed legal instrument (not binding) in the field.

369 Whether it is declared or just inherent in a paper labelled “independent”, or Social Democratic, Radical, Liberal, Conservative...
vention of Human Rights refers to the interference of public authority and frontiers, but it is clear that the development of market monopolies might play the same role as public authority and frontiers. This is a subject of a discussion on “formal” and “real” human rights which has been going on for decades. Changes in the map of representation of political opinion in cultural production might jeopardize the stability of the system, earlier oppositions may become obsolete, new borders drawn, which make the system less responsive to aspirations of pluralism. The challenge to the traditional dichotomy between the left and right wings of ideological systems by environmentalist, regionalist, feminist, populist, religious trends might illustrate this necessity of adaptation. It is, however, also clear that the European Human Rights Convention does not set any particular borders to the interventions of public authority to promote pluralism – the problems are appearing at the confrontation between the economic liberalism fundamental to the European Union and its predecessors on one hand, and on the other the more pragmatic, and certainly, in the wake of the general trend of planned economy also in democratic states during and after the Second World War, understanding attitude to public regulations of economic activities, an attitude perhaps revaluated in the financial system disorders.

Other aspects of representativity than political or ideological ones, such as of regional, cultural or religious/philosophical diversity, generations, age, etc. tend to play a growing role, in the media landscape, perhaps due to a “depolitization” of some of the younger generations.

By and large, however, speaking in commonplace ideological terms, however, the “right turn” of the political opinion spectrum has not obliterated the basic border-lines between political attitudes. Neither has the balance between right and left in parliaments changed substantially, albeit small but sufficient shifts occur, leading both to new governments and sometimes to changes of party structures. One possible, and significant, implication of this situation would be, either that the role of the press in party politics is not as important as it sometimes is thought to be – hence a “de-mediatisation” move in politics! - or that the entire spectrum is being remodelled, involving another, new, kind of interaction between the media and the political sphere. The change in the other major media, is likely to have favoured the right-wing of the political spectrum rather than the opposite, primarily through the advent of commercial television. This would bring in another “de-mediatisation” aspect to the complex relationship between “structure and content” of the media on one hand and its influence of “content” on political opinion on the other.

In Europe the role of the extreme right, mostly mixed with a general populism, has grown - not necessarily and permanently in terms of numerical strength in parliaments, but in terms of

370 http://www.bri.org/docs/ECHR50.html#C.Art10

ARTICLE 10
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

371 Contrary to what might be the case argued by “death of the ideologies” futurologists of the 70s, and later Fukuyama and other adherents of the “end of history”. Fukuyama has recently modified his more extreme expressions of this faith.
372 Obviously the New Labour party of Tony Blair and his advisors, the best known of them Anthony Giddens, has taken a different position in the political spectrum from the traditional Labour party. Other examples of this kind are the transformation of the former Austrian liberal party to a xenophobic populist extreme right party, the Danish traditionally liberal Venstre (“Left”) party to a Neo-liberal right-wing party, supported by a xenophobic populist group in parliament, or the reverse, the transformations of the ruling Communist parties of Eastern Europe to Social Democratic parties, or of the Italian Alleanza Nazionale from Neo-Fascism to a more “normal” and socially accepted conservative party. The differences, in terms of voters’ shares, tend to be very small – in Italy some tens of thousands votes were enough to overturn Berlusconi, in Sweden 1,5 % of the electorate, in Germany minimal differences brought the Big Coalition into power etc.
political and public attention, and popular support in elections, forcing older political forces to pay attention to their positions. This upsurge has taken place despite the weak positions of these movements in the media – and their anti-intellectual or culturo-phobic attitudes. This holds for Austria (FPÖ), Belgium (Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang), Denmark (Dansk Folkeparti), France (Front National), Italy (Alleanza Nazionale and Lega Nord), The Netherlands (Pim Fortuyn and his followers), Norway (Fremskrittpartiet), Poland (Samoobrona), Sweden (Ny Demokrati, temporarily, Sverige-Demokraterna) and Switzerland (Blocker’s party). So far, this political tendency does not express itself in its own cultural production, apart from more or less underground communication channels on the Internet or rather obscure papers with a poor distribution. But it is present, often in a negative way, in the other media, as a target of critique, condemnation and information campaigns, as well as reactions to actions of violence performed by fascist, racist or Neo-Nazi individuals or small groups.

The idea of representativity, as a dimension of pluralism of content in cultural production, is difficult one to put into actual operative practice. It makes historical comparisons and the notions of media pluralism and concentration more complex, since they must relate to a yardstick that moves and changes continuously. The existence of a certain time lag is, perhaps, unavoidable: this would mean that a particular spectrum or space of opinions – in distinction to the opinions themselves – will inevitably be somewhat obsolete in nature, or ‘frozen’. The snag is that the measurements of the opinion space will become more “absolute” than they are, because of this “conservatism”. Also, the judgement on what tendencies or groups that “ought to” be represented on the media depends on both quantitative factors and political evaluations, which sometimes emanate in a position that the exclusion of certain expressions is justified. In the last run the access for diverse opinions to the media could not be regulated, and must be dependent on the operators themselves.

**Pluralism and Public Policy**

Media policies are mostly based on partial or intuitive (sometimes supported by systematic statistics, sometimes not) appreciations of pluralism, mostly in negative terms, that is, the eventual decline of the pluralism of media products. Mostly, media owners have managed to convince public opinion, or at least political leaders, that changes in pluralism are not primarily to be attributed to ownership or other external factors and that, accordingly, reduction of the number of owners and titles has to be accepted to a certain extent, because of the primary interest to minimise intervention in the regulatory or structural framework of the media.

The corporate and industrial interest media organisations (such as the World Association of Newspapers, the European Publishers’ Council and others) have implicitly recognized the lack of diversity in many areas. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the acceptance of subsidies and relieves to media companies, existing in practically every country (also in the US). Mostly, media companies of the private sector, and their political spokesmen, have also accepted that the State, for example through public service companies in the broadcasting sector, assumes responsibility for some part of the broadcasting supply, be it education, arts, or science. Complaints about illicit state support to the European Union has concerned areas where there is a clear competition

---

376 Due to, probably, the “drama of expectations” in matters of press freedom cited above.

377 One example is the attitude of the Swedish Conservative party (Moderaterna) which, though advocating a sell-out of most public broadcasting companies and a deregulation of the media market, still favours State responsibility for some sectors of the media field, in broadcasting – for reasons of quality. The German constitutional rule of the obligation of the State to provide basic information is a parallel.
of programme material as well as advertising revenues between state broadcasting corporations and private operators.

In their official rhetoric, media organisations, however, often sound as if they reject any kind of subventions as well as state companies. The European Union, while proclaiming the ideals of a private capital domination in the economy and a free market, still upholds an ambition to regulate and also (in the field of film and television programme production and cultural policy) to subsidize the media. The Council of Europe, which does not subscribe in its basic treaties to any particular economic-political ideologies (as noted, the Council was founded in an era when State companies as well as strict market regulations and planned economies were quite frequent in most of post-war Western Europe) has tended to follow the same kind of policies, but not for reasons of principle.

A corollary of the position of the media organisations has been their preference for general interventions rather than selective. While this is understandable as a general principle, it has often got the fatal snag of exacerbating market disequilibria rather than promoting competition. This depends, naturally, subject to the degree of generality advocated, on the fact that stronger and more successful media companies in general systems of subventions or tax reliefs etc. will benefit more than smaller ones. By and large this is the situation in the United States, but another example is the Swedish press distribution subsidy system. That system, actually, due to its general rather than selective character, both give higher subsidies to the most dominant press groups and, in some cases, even fortifies the dependence of weaker newspapers on the stronger ones. This does not exclude that this kind of subsidy system may be a survival condition of some smaller newspapers, being drafted to stronger competitors, and at the mercy of those. Stronger actors also have an interest in sharing the costs of distribution – and consequently there is an incitement also for these companies. In Sweden this and other subvention systems have in recent years even promoted the creation of common business organisations – the smaller (usually Social-Democratic) newspapers being purchased by the larger (liberal or conservative) ones, but still published as separate titles and retaining a certain editorial, including political, independence.

Some participants in the debate have actually advocated this kind of development as an exit from the present situation of competition between media. A model of “media factories” is suggested, where these do not act in partisan interests but produce a diverse media output, catering for different political, ideological etc. interests. In Scandinavia this kind of development has become rather frequent, though the original idea was at least partially taken from the old Soviet system, where often the physical aspects of media production was taken care of by separate organisations, not necessarily linked to the content production.

The Norwegian media group Schibsted – traditionally conservative – has, for example, taken over the control both of Aftenbladet, the biggest Swedish Social-Democratic daily (tabloid), and the conservative flagship Svenska Dagbladet. The traditionally liberal Swedish newsgroup and editor Bonniers controls a number of dailies in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and the Baltic States, mostly liberal but sometimes conservative.

It is however rather clear that the position of left-wing press, or the remainder of it, is not as a whole reinforced by this process, although a certain prolongation of its life might be a result. It is, of course, an interesting issue to see whether political independence is really possible to uphold under these new terms of economic dependence. As already suggested, the very essence of market economy ideology seem to contradict such an assumption, by virtue of its claim that only a genuine profit interest on the side of owners guarantees genuine competition and diversity in markets. Consequently, only if the political independence of the remaining weaker titles, under economic control of their political adversaries, is judged to be insignificant for the interests of their owners, the content would remain unaltered, as a kind of gesture of charity or “repressive
tolerance”. Otherwise a gradual adaptation of the content of these products to the interests of their owners should be expected.

This problem seems to be analogous to the more general issue of the relationship between financing cultural production and the people engaged in the production – touched upon in the introduction of this study, under the label of the “Piper’s principle”. The problems occur in cultural production, irrespectively of private or public financial sources. The actual independence, in real terms, will be dependent on the quality of safety barriers between financing bodies and the producer. It is clear that the public sphere, because of its obligation to cater for all, or at least a wide range of, interests, will not normally be under the same pressure as a private entrepreneur to control the details of content in cultural production. Also, the construction and preservation of safety barriers in this sphere is more or less a necessity in a democratic society for the upholding of continuity of administration over changes of government, although barriers are not rarely demolished or damaged by political interference.

**Hopes of politicians**

The notion of ‘politician’ is somewhat abused today, and the contempt for politicians has become a banality. References are made to politicians as a collective, or a “class”, with common basic interests, an assumption which appears to be abundantly confirmed by the tremendous amount of scandals and corruption affairs, also in most democratic states of today. Nevertheless, the boundaries inside the “political class” itself might turn out to be much sharper than those between some elected politicians and representatives or other power-holders from the industry. Partly following the proposal to extend the political sphere beyond holders of public offices and positions – to the “authorities” as suggested by Susan Strange also non-elected “politicians”, i.e. policy-makers of large organisations and corporations, are expected to somehow legitimise their authority and face responsibility to the public. “Accountability” has become a demand on most power-holders, including the media workers and owners. This notion, obviously borrowed from the corporate world, has become extended also to the public sector in general.

Measuring media pluralism is subject to the predicament besetting every decision-maker: taking decisions is based on human judgements. This may seem a triviality but its counterpart is: human judgement determines measures, and orders them according to the intentions and purposes of those who take the judgements. Numerical thresholds, market share values and other figures are seductive in that they seem to offer automatised and unbiased procedures of intervention into strategies of enterprises or inter-company relations (“the market”). In cultural policy this attraction is particularly prevalent, quite understandably so, due to the respect for the role of the media and other cultural production in a democratic society. The construction of a numerical “neutral” platform for interventions deemed necessary relieves office holders from unpleasant decisions and charges for being biased. It is a quite respectable and to some degree indispensable position, a safeguard against corruption. Still its shortcomings in concrete cases may be obvious, and become more and more problematic to repair, as technical and economic developments of media structure reverse the bases of action.

The Swedish subsidies to the daily press illustrate these difficulties amply. The system is constructed upon public acceptance of measurements of circulation shares, measurements agreed upon by the Swedish Union of Newspaper Editors (TU), but performed and administered by a private business company. The rules of the (very complex) system are notably designed as automatic rules: once a newspaper falls within the rules, the small Committee for Press Support (consisting of parliamentary politicians), under a minimum of administrative procedures, pays the subsidy due. No longish procedures of examinations are necessary.

Despite this pro forma automatic system, its rules are often amended – mostly in consequence of market changes, but sometimes, notably in times of major structural changes as

---

379 Strange 1996
recently, also guided by political decisions, which are far from the ideals of automation. Another snag of the system is that newspapers adapt to the rules, consequently making some of them more dependent (up to 60%) on subsidies. Even newspapers produced on a more regular market basis may be tempted to adapt to the subventions, and therefore sometimes refrain from necessary re-structurations. Ministers and Parliament are then faced with more demands for raised subventions, which was precisely the idea to avoid when adopting the “automatic” regulations. The original idea to regard the subsidy system as a method to strengthen the competitive position of the weaker newspapers, not creating a situation of permanent dependence, has not either been realised. The same newspapers have continued to receive subsidies, since 30 years. In conclusion, one might argue that the hope of promoting a change of the structural situation, introducing an “automatic” media subsidy policy based on measurement has been vain. On a more philosophical level this might correspond to the general fragility in the belief in measures as such – as a means to be freed from voluntary decision procedures.  

That does not mean that measuring has not brought about benefits: the Swedish press market is in some respect probably the best known and transparent market in the world – providing clients and actors with very good data. In the long run this circumstance may prove to be the most valuable part of the hope for liberation from political responsibility... 

But there is another snag – more serious, it seems. The Swedish system of subsidies to the press, “automatic” in its ambitions, but rather selective and ad hoc in some of its practical applications and regulatory developments, may also suggest the impression that rather modest interventions in the market structure might suffice and that deep-going interventions could be avoided. This has – I venture to say - essentially implied accepting the process of concentration of the control over the media. The positions of those states where no intervention at all has been undertaken are, to be sure, even less tenable from this point of view: it is more or less pure 19th Century laissez-faire policy. This should not be interpreted to say that the choice of policies is simple. 

Concentration of ownership in the newspaper sector is basically due to the imbalance in the advertising investment flows, which might, in economic terms, be regarded as a major market distortion, seen from the point of view of the relations between sellers and buyers of media consumption products. From the point of view of publicity traders the situation is nearly the reverse: the interest in the media product expressed by the consumer’s buying it or using it in some other way (without paying directly), might be regarded as a secondary influence disturbing the primary interest of reaching as much attention as possible for the advertisement.

If anything could be done to change established economic structures in this field - it may be too late now - this imbalance must be somehow corrected, in what will necessarily have to be a rather brutal manner. This means reducing the income of the favoured oligopolies or monopolies rather drastically, for example by some kind of progressive taxation system of advertising income (earlier practised in Sweden, under the name of a concessionary levy, for analogue terrestrial commercial television). Apart from being met with violent protests from the industry, such a system would entail consequences for the newspaper sector, and media enterprises as a whole, of a dimension that is not quite predictable. It will establish a radical transfer of income from advertising from those favoured to those less favoured, or rather a block to a market process which favours the already favoured. It would be an intervention of a “Robin Hood-character” turning a lot of strategies and business opportunities upside down. This is, however, not en entirely unknown phenomenon, neither in the economy as a whole (as war-time regulations and rationing systems show) nor in the cultural production sector. The case of “collectivised” television events demonstrates this for some occasional and selected areas, such as the major sports, cultural or

\[380\] Even a “theological” aspect might be noted: Protestant Christianity, just as Jewry and Islam, assigns exclusive value to written texts, more than perhaps other religions which more emphasize tradition and practice. In political life the English tradition of non-written constitution invalidates any claim that written constitutions are the sole guarantee of democratic rule.
traditional happenings specifically listed for submission to the European Commission and being prohibited for broadcasting over pay-TV-channels only.

In general political life it is quite clear that interventionism is not the general trend – after mobilisation restrictions being rolled back for a major part, though arms production and war preparation are still highly regulated industries in major producing states like the US, France, UK, and many other countries. Actual trends go the opposite way - even the modest and restricted advertising tax so far levied (in the Swedish case) is about to be abolished, largely due to EU standardisation and competition regulations, and also for technical reasons

Increasing advertising tax along a progressive model is likely to imply a rather strong cost pressure upwards for customers – since subventions from advertising will somehow have to be compensated by rising consumer prices, or altogether ruin business for products like free-copy newspapers, commercial advertising financed television and radio etc. This depends of course on the concrete realisation of the models of these schemes – if ever applied. A rise in consumer prices will also mean a reduction of consumption – a newspaper which costs twice as much as today will probably not reach the same sales figures as today. Also reduction of employment might ensue – a much lower level of employment is already the case in some of the media sector, such as free-copy newspapers, where much of the material is bought from external sources instead of being in-house produced. On the other hand, this development is already well on its way since the advent of digitisation. All in all, it is abundantly clear that there is no simple and painless way to overcome problems of pluralism caused by economic monopolisation processes in the press.

Measuring sales, circulation (or readership) of newspapers and most other media products have as such little to do with measuring diversity/pluralism and quality of content. Its primary purpose is commercial, both in relation to the consumers, or users, and to advertisers. However, both direct and indirect criteria of content and quality are built into the system - as spelt out in various government bills and commission reports in most countries on the issue. Customarily news and current affairs reporting, political debate and commentary, not entertainment or commercial information are in focus of debates on media policies, in particular whenever support to structures is evoked. Entertainment is rather regarded as one of the dangers to news and public affairs reporting and discussion in the mass media. Analogously, cultural policies in general do not usually deal with entertainment in the ordinary sense, but with cultural heritage and the arts, customarily not regarded as entertainment.

The objective for media support in the newspaper sector has been to sustain a minimal level of political pluralism – for example in the two still existing Scandinavian systems by subsidizing weak (mostly Social Democratic) newspapers and contributing to the survival of some other threatened papers. Pluralism of content in a more general, cultural or “sectoral” meaning, has not been focussed at.

A characteristic of the system in those countries is that single copy sale papers, mostly containing “popular” or entertainment stuff (traditional “tabloids”) are excluded from subsidies, although one of the two remaining papers on the Swedish market long suffered huge losses. The morning daily, in Scandinavia mainly sold by subscription, is the quality norm, not the “popular” single-copy sold press. Since quality values for the press subsidy regulations are identified by parliamentary politicians, who decide on the (frequent) amendments to the system, this view on quality is, as it were, coronated into a public norm.

381 It is surprising that it has lasted so long, since pressure from the newspaper industry, including the weak small surviving Social Democratic newspapers, has been strong for decades.
382 Such as, in Sweden the major Conservative national daily Sveriges Dagbladet, the major daily Svenska Dagbladet of the Centre Party, as well as some small “weekly dailies” affiliated to the same party.
383 Practically all newspapers in Sweden have a tabloid format today, actually.
384 In Norway and Sweden Social Democratic, Centre, Left and Green party parliamentarians have supported press subsidies, while Conservative and Liberal parties have been against or reluctant. Denmark and Finland have no subsidy system in operation at present – and the Danish daily press is, with one sole exception, identifiable as liberal or conservative in its outlook. The
Basically, the Scandinavian experience shows that the idea of measuring as removing political responsibility for structural intervention is an illusion, but it has still served its purpose as a political compromise for 30 years. A number of signs seem however to indicate that the system, despite its relative level of temporary success, is more or less derelict. This is due to factors like the acceleration of concentration processes, the advent of new inter-party press or media groups, “neutralisation” of newspapers by way of employing more external commentators, including several different editorials in one paper, and last but not least, the success of the free-copy press as a more modest, often “neutral”, kind of press.

Hopes of replacing or supplementing concrete and technical circulation figures (audience figures) by some other “neutral” measurements, such as genre diversity measures, have a relevance for the issue of linking structural changes to changes of content.

The genre diversity measures are linked to the other potent force of change: “professionalisation” of journalism, in several ways, first of all to the above-cited hierarchy of genres, which also inheres in the status hierarchies of media professions.

Professionalisation means that journalists increasingly share the same kind of background, education, professional culture - including traditions of news evaluation, ethical principles and other values taught in journalism training schools or centres. Political and ideological attitudes might often also be part of the “discourse training” of media education, though seldom recorded publicly. This point will be elaborated below.

Despite the necessity to distinguish the essentially political nature of the issue of pluralism of content, one prerequisite for a minimal level of pluralism in the opinion space is the existence of a reasonable balance between diverse kinds of content (genres) in the existing media markets. Media landscapes that do not contain a minimal offer, within the most popular media on the market, of basic news, current affairs and some investigatory or critical reporting would not qualify as containing a minimum of pluralism. Again, “access” as such is not enough, since, by the “Soviet criterion” suggested above, this consumer-focused perspective tends to overlook the realities of the market, and therefore the power of particular opinions. The contemporary development of media in most societies tends to complicate this issue, since entertainment and sports have become the, not least economically, most important ingredient in the dominant media outlets – first of all television. Also the daily press includes some successful outlets, exclusively devoted to sports, for example L’Équipe in France and Gazzetta dello Sport in Italy (biggest in circulation).

This does not mean that political aspects do not play any role in those genres of media production. On the contrary, “info-tainment” and aspects of e.g. sports reporting, just as in cultural programmes of a traditional kind, contain references to current affairs, which influence public opinion, perhaps as much as general newscasts and reporting. This presence is not seldom of an indirect nature - which calls for a growing ambition of observation of these genres from the point of view applied in this study. The growing attention to “popular culture” from media scholars is a healthy sign in this direction.

**Professionalisation of media workers**

The professionalisation of media workers has often been regarded as a protection of media pluralism, since the standards established within the professions are considered to form a bulwark against unjustified pressures both from the owners or external groups or interests. Conversely, an opposite view is often advanced – not least by media owners, editors-in-chief and some political circles – viz. that professionalisation represents a risk for reduced pluralism, by the

---

view of C Edwin Baker, having examined press subsidy systems in Sweden, is that single copy sold papers are preferable from a pluralism point of view, since they do not bind readers/buyers to one single product.

385 This notion has already been called into question for its ambiguity, but carries a number of intriguing tasks with it from any of the connotations linked to the notion.

386 Notably in right-wing trends, such as the Liberal party in Sweden (Minister of Culture 1991-1994 Fråggebo).
uniformisation of norms and values, with an ensuing marginalisation of deviant views, attitudes and methods, reinforced by the sociologically established fact that professional journalists are still recruited from a rather narrow middle-class social group.

This latter point of view is, somewhat unexpectedly since he did not normally share the perspectives of media owners, also a salient point in Bourdieu’s ferocious (and, to be true, somewhat unarticulated) criticism towards the “journalistic take-over” \(^{387}\). It also underlies the kind of general scholarly criticism of traditional values in culture and media presented by the cultural studies inspired by Raymond Williams \(^{388}\), backed up by the studies of Foucault, Peter Burke and others, historically philosophically inspired by Nietzsche. These strands of thought study any kind of expression, and indeed any use of cultural forms, as potential political gestures of resistance. For the cultural studies tradition, “low-rated” or “popular” media and content categories, such as - in diverse periods - jazz, rock music, rap, youth discourse and communication customs, consumption patterns in shopping etc. are the centre of interest. Consequently the, next to automatic, “quality” stamp of the fine arts, and in the media sphere TV news, current affairs programmes, newspaper editorials etc. is put into question. The discussion is rather complex though, since, for example, Bourdieu himself rejects \(^{389}\), it seems, the entire notion of popular culture.

**Differentiation of media products**

This web of values and perspectives does not render genre diversity measures uninteresting, but blurs the image of their value-neutrality. Apart from the more social and political aspects touched upon hitherto, one additional reason is that the media sector (including both market and non-market actors) is becoming more specialised, and that outlets and content consequently become more targeted, obviously first of all web-sites but also for example TV and radio channels, and magazines. This has an important consequence for the public policy debate, strangely not always noted, since it implies that measurement of genre diversity must be directed to *entire markets*, geographical areas, social groups etc. in order to gauge political pluralism - not to individual channels, individual newspapers or other media outlets or cultural products. This is obviously an additional complication, since it requires that these areas or markets (social fields or spheres...) are possible to determine in some reasonably uncontroversial manner. Despite the processes, undeniable I think, of a growing “internal” pluralism (sometimes only a “neutralisation” though) of some allround media (in particular some monopoly daily broadsheet newspapers and public broadcasting), the described specialisation and differentiation of the markets require an even more intense attention to the *total* supply in a market or a geographical area.

**Regulation**

This has far-reaching consequences for any kind of regulatory work built on measures of content, whether of the genre diversity kind or any deeper evaluative approach. Regulatory efforts in this area have, so far, been mostly attached to the judgement that ownership still plays a dominant role for the political profiles of media products. Basically this still holds stock but economic interests tend to play a much greater role than before, albeit mostly hand in hand with long-term political aspirations or affiliations. In ordinary business practice the suppliers know rather well the concrete realities of a market, whether determined by economic, other social, such as ethnic, or geographical criteria, but the adaptation of regulatory interventions to these realities – extremely volatile, diversified and dynamic in many cases – may be very difficult to perform, particularly in view of the requirement of public regulations to be stable, equitable and neutral in between actors in a market. Still, regulation has to some extent always to be “adapted to the market” – not necessarily to the interests of producers or suppliers or capital owners – in order to be

---

387 “On Television”

388 With predecessors already mentioned, such as Benjamin, anthropologists in general, perhaps also Benjamin’s friend Siegfried Kracauer.

389 “Questions de sociologie” p.15...
effective. Regulations on how pigs could be let loose in oak forests (one of the most venerable Swedish laws, dating from 1736), are obviously not central to political life.

On the other hand, the assessment of contents is hardly possible to incorporate in the formal political regulatory systems. No agreement is likely to cross political borders, even if rather sophisticated measurement systems might be created, using most detailed and tested computerised content analysis systems. Therefore the existence of systems of assessment outside the formal political sphere, working on a long-term basis, revising methods and data categories but keeping some degree of comparability seems to be the only realistic tool. This does not exclude, naturally, that public support or private funds might not be required and, indeed, possible to master without too much biases dependent on the “Piper’s principle”. Arms-length mechanisms are rather well tested and in use for a long time in most areas of cultural production, though never infallible or completely protective – which is, in itself, just a wishful thinking.

This kind of system exists in various institutions, such as the Columbia Journalism Review (www.cjr.org), and in various statistical compilations (Zenith, Media Map etc.) or national registers of media ownership.\(^\text{390}\) The activities of diverse corporate and public interests, the existence of products, (within reasonable quantitative limits) on the market etc. will not offer material for exact and final judgements in a regulatory framework, but a basis for a political judgement that must in any case be taken.

A well-known and nearly insoluble problem, in the media market, just as in car or any other market, is how to determine a relevant market. Still this is what competition authorities, just as business actors, have to do. One additional difficulty in a market of “immaterials” is that the importance of a media product (its position) is not merely related to its sale in a region or to a group, or a market. A whole range of social and cultural considerations – featured by Bourdieu’s notions of social and cultural capital - are equally important: the Swedish newspaper flagship Dagena Nybeyter has a minimal share of circulation outside its main distribution area (just as Gazeta Wyborcza or any other “leading” daily is mostly very small in all regions outside the capital), still its position is of national relevance, not only relevance to the capital city morning newspaper market. Therefore, most considerations on ownership in the media have to pay attention also to other aspects than sales figures (audience figures are less concrete and less reliable) and market shares.

Finally, it is a complex whole of these economic, social and cultural factors that must be the basis of any kind of regulation in the cultural field, including the regulation (if any) of the rights of owners and producers – and the restrictions of influence or domination. It is a difficult, and probably never politically uncontroversial task, but not impossible. In any political field legal regulation is a question of balance between diverse interests, and only the closeness of perspective sometimes obscures the fact that this is the situation in affluent modern, post-modern or “experience economy” democratic societies just as in poor, traditional or undemocratic structures.

**Power structures: cultural pluralism risk management**

In preceding sections of this study, a political perspective on cultural production policies has been suggested, based on the idea of taking environmental risk control as a model for an analogous system in cultural production, specifically media production. The ongoing world-wide discussion on global warming may serve as a pervading – though still controversial – illustration of how a model for environmental policy management has gradually come to occupy the public agenda. Global warming problems include many of the aspects which on an immaterial level might be applied for cultural production considerations, such as

---

390 One such register was established in the framework of the Swedish ‘Council for Pluralism in the Media’ (1995-97) and transferred to and developed by Nordicom, the Nordic Institute of Media and Communication Research.

392 The last notion is rather different from the traditional ‘critical’ concept of ‘mediatisation’ of society.
the overriding “survival” aspect, of humanity, or living nature as such in the environmental perspective, or democratic rule, in the social/political perspective specifically, the plurality of species as the predominant criterion of prospects of survival (90 % of all species are thought to have been exterminated in the last - 250 million years ago? - general global catastrophe, the multiplicity of measures (in both senses, assessment and interventions, or actions) necessary to tackle the issue, viz. political, scientific, information related, economic etc., the necessity to overrule some deviant opinions, although those might be represented by economically very heavy interests, and power structures, and assisted by some expertise, thus depicting also scholarly opinion as rather divided on the issue.

This is not the place of a fully-fledged proposal for a political (in the extended, “feudal” sense as well!) strategy of encountering risks presented by monopolisation of media structure, much less than for the survival of living nature or the multiplicity of species. This study is rather directed to contributing to a deeper understanding and analysis of the problems tied to the new cultural production structures, in the post-industrial late capitalist societies – the media industries serving as a focus of the inquiry. The philosophical considerations of both an epistemological and political nature are one of the necessary ingredients in such an inquiry.

Nevertheless, even from the point of view of a more practical approach, the preceding observations might point at at least one basic ingredient in such a strategy, viz. that knowledge and analysis of pluralism and quality might serve as the fundament of an operative system of risk management.

The basic forces behind the transformations of cultural production, including media structure, have, in rough terms, been summarised in three slogans: digitalisation, globalisation, mediatisation. Measurement of “media environmental risks” modelled on environmental risk measurement, management and regulation/policy takes its point of departure at monitoring. Just as a television screen is used to monitor people who enter and leave a site or building, a mechanism surveying and observing media companies and structures, including the “space of opinions”, is the basic intuition. The base of any such system is continuous data collection and an observation program. The data collection part of the task is advancing quite impressively in many areas, in some areas of cultural production, such as the media sector, for example, in the Nordic area and in the United States, and an extensive coverage of media ownership and control as well as market shares is no doubt within the reach of international research cooperation, provided some (rather limited) resources are put at the disposal. In the business sector quite a lot of similar work is being done, as an ingredient of market surveys – albeit on a neutral level, and so business firms could benefit without investing too much in direct profit-related market research, which is naturally of a more confidential character in a competition situation.

This kind of monitoring effort is customary in general industrial research, which is also divided into one sector where – mostly publicly subsidised – studies are put at the disposal of various interested parties, and another sector, where business interests invest more directly and, consequently, results are reserved for investors.

Such a cooperative monitoring effort - why not use the organisational model of management consultants mentioned above? - could be quite instrumental in building up a public knowledge base of risks to pluralism (actual and in the “opinion space”) encountered in the new media environment. It might underpin policy measures aimed at promoting both a widened ac-

---

393 The border-line between those two zones is presently sliding towards reserving more and more research results for private profit-making interests – the best known example is the human genome mapping, but also numerous results from biotechnology, even at the limit of the absurd. The Monsanto patent and legal pursuits on some cereals seeds is perhaps the best known case of this absurd character.
cess to media for a larger number of people (next to total access might be attainable for the inhabitants of the richer parts of the world), and restricting practices, purchases and mergers that might increase the risks for a shrinking opinion space.

**Monitoring public, private and civil sectors**

Cultural production takes place in all the three socio-economic spheres usually included in social analysis: public, private, and “civil society”. Monitoring structures should normally include all these spheres so as to gauge their respective weight and dynamic power, from the point of view of pluralism in cultural production, notably the media. In most cases in the Western world, the activities of the free market actors are, however, more interesting for a risk assessment. Public enterprise is, notably, public also in the sense of allowing for greater transparency than ordinary competitive commercial enterprise. It is therefore of particular interest to monitor privatisation of public enterprises - both in terms of ownership and in terms of business relations and practises, as well as programme policies. And trends of monopolisation are, no doubt, much stronger in the private sector, although the initial phase of deregulation has meant that numerous new actors have entered the market.

Today many national media policy makers in Europe entertain a confidence in the inherited public service broadcasting structures - a confidence that might in some respects be over-optimistic in view of the rapid structural changes taking place, technologically, economically and geographically. Still, this confidence reflects a degree of scepticism – to my mind grounded towards present trends of voluntary abdication of the role of the state and the public sector as a guarantor of both pluralism and access to the media arena.

Couching the matter in somewhat polemical, ideology-laden, terms it is abundantly evident that a “Socialist” model has proven its success, historically, in the media field, as far as broadcasting is concerned, both in terms of pluralism and quality. In the democratic structure of Western Europe it is actually the State (ns publica) , despite numerous shortcomings and failures, has proven itself to be the best safeguard of a liberal media and information structure in the broadcasting field, in the sense of providing opportunities for many different, divergent, opinions to reach the general public, and to offer many different kinds of minority groups opportunities to be heard, irrespective of their financial or political strength. This has also been the reason for a rather stable consensus around the view that it is the task of the state and/or other public authorities or institutions to safeguard pluralism and prevent risks to it, also in the era of deregulation of the media market and the introduction in general of commercial broadcasting. The market-ridden model of the United States shows, particularly in its later stages, despite its richness and abundant supply, so fundamental weaknesses from the point of view of opening the space of broadcasting and other audiovisual media distribution forms to different groups, that the “Socialist” model has not much to fear, in terms of the survival of a reserved sector of media and cultural production. This is the main reason why the focus of a risk management system should be on the private sector.

As far as the “civil society sector” of media production, this is mostly in the background of media policy discussions, undeservedly. The production of magazines, information material, etc. by various organisations such as cultural associations, trade unions, professional organisations, research bodies and non-profit associations may in many cases be subject to some market considerations, since the owners of such outlets might not be prepared to carry unrestricted losses. But mostly there is a primary objective to those production units, different from profit-making. Political newspapers or magazines might sometimes be in an intermediary zone, having to show some level of economic prospects of not-too-heavy losses, though development of the

394 The notion of ‘public service’ in the media sector is a very complex and today perhaps even contradictory one, as argued by myself and others, like Trine Syvertsen in Oslo. A terminology which focusses on the formal public ownership might be more clear-cut although not preferred by the concerned companies themselves, since it deprives them of the kind of august position of impartiality which is associated to their particular status as public companies.
daily press in Europe and North America has demonstrated that there are clear limits to the financial force of this kind of press.

In the press sector, the rich flora of magazines, newsletters and other kinds of publications from the public sector is also often neglected, though it is quite a substantial production – just think of all government publications, municipal information leaflets, small annual reports etc.

The discussions around the role of the state in preserving and promoting political pluralism – precisely by, among other things, being involved in some security measures protecting the public space (in the general sense) from monopolisation risks – is, understandably enough, influenced by the sad experiences of the 20th C totalitarian regimes.

Experience should, however, since at least the establishment of public service broadcasting along the BBC model, teach us to separate between the dictatorial functions of a state, which is beyond the real control of the people on one hand, and the exercise of authentic democratic authority, within the precincts of a strong state. The state, as established in democratic structures, might be vulnerable to all sorts of mechanisms weakening its range of action, among those obviously the media, but unless this state is not just a façade, it will in itself be capable of intervening favour of pluralism. This is not to say that the breakdown of democratic rule is not possible by gradual processes, such as media concentration or monopolisation – history does not repeat itself and the establishment of democracy is a rather recent historical phenomenon, by no means necessarily irreversible.

Media monitoring mechanisms are not a sufficient measure, of course – a complex strategy of measures is required to set up a strategy for pluralism in the media. But it is a necessary basis for any such strategy. Other ingredients in such mechanisms have been listed by the Council of Europe in the cited recommendation, as a whole catalogue of measures to be selected from the broad categories of restrictions (regulated or voluntary) to public subsidies, public media companies, transparency of media companies, information and research, promotion of editorial independence etc. These measures might be considered elements of media early warning systems or media pluralism environmental protection system, or, taking precisely this task as central in media policy, of media policy as such, perhaps even cultural policy in a wider understanding.

It is necessary to understand the notion of policy in the wider sense proposed above. That implies that the “stations” in the warning system will not only be state-run or public. An important, perhaps even dominant, role should be played by other interests, first of all the media themselves, whether media staff unions (journalists, other employed, editors), employers and/or owners. Also perhaps cultural bodies like academies (notorious for their conservative but also often independent attitudes), and special non-governmental bodies set up by relevant interests might be partners, as well as the judiciary. It is also essential that the national systems established should be linked to some kind of international, governmental and non-governmental network.

The Council of Europe, being the supreme European body for human rights issues, might be entrusted with a mandate to monitor, and examine the status of media pluralism in Europe in more practical terms – as it is already in theory, in view of its mandate as the only judicial body in Europe on human rights issues. For this purpose it has to be equipped, as is the OECD in the economic field, with competent scientific staff and other resources required. From the European Union not much could be expected at present, since its political bias for non-interventionist market solutions has in practice mostly favoured dominant media corporate interests. Nevertheless, all efforts should be made to involve its more powerful machinery in this system. Much effort will have to be devoted to the examination of the media structure in the US as well, since it plays a crucial role for any possibility to manage risks in the cultural industries and media sector. US institutions, such as universities and professional organisations, have already quite an impressive set of data and an accessibility to be envied. Briefly, on the scientific level systematic partnership is quite possible to establish across the Atlantic. The Media Watch network is, as a matter of fact, one embryo of such an institution, other have been cited already.

395 http://www.mediaswatch.org/
INTERVENTIONS AND MARKET IN A RISK STRATEGY

A risk management strategy for the “preservation of species in the cultural environment” has to be designed in a process of gradual approaches. The steps to be taken involve many partners – perhaps the progress is quicker if the international research community takes the lead, perhaps together with social movements, rather than public authorities.

This study does not propose details in a strategy but a few selected ideas on how some of the problems of media concentration might be tackled, be it only as food for discussion. For a more exhaustive list the above-mentioned measures contained in the Council of Europe Recommendation constitute quite a rich set of proposals, some of which are compatible with each other, some not.

The measures briefly sketched below are not part of this recommendation – they are, probably, as indicated above, an indication of the degree of radicality required to change the course of development towards further monopolisation, and therefore not likely to be included in a context of consensus, characteristic of international organisations. Precisely because of this they might serve as examples of the dilemmas involved in a market economy the mechanisms of which risk to turn the desired state of competition of opinions into a uniform mass of similar or repetitive messages. They are both intended to suggest a strategy that, albeit probably rather unacceptable by media companies, might turn a policy structure beset by market dynamics, and accordingly open to monopolisation processes in the production sphere, somewhat upside down. Whatever the nature of a risk strategy might be, it involves a considerable ingredient of public intervention, though not always and necessarily by traditional means such as funding or regulation.

Progressive advertising tax

Advertising is the main source of income of many media outlets, but also the main source of imbalance, due to the different structures and target groups of respectively sale of media products on the consumer market on one hand, and services to the advertisers on the publicity market. Products offered on these two markets are radically different: consumers or users demand “content”, and advertisers demand “attention”, crudely speaking. Just as markets might distort each other (for example the demand for health services and production of pharmaceuticals, or even state policies for health care) these two markets interfere radically, since the supply of much of media content – differently from most other cultural products (education, religion, legal norms, research, arts, literature…) – is heavily “subsidized” by other interests than those of the consumers (users, buyers) of the content of end products. Subventions mostly come from advertisers (press, radio, TV, Internet) but also public authorities in various degrees. Obviously “cultural policies” in the narrow sense (referring primarily to the fine arts and cultural heritage) are traditionally, for their major part in many countries heavily subsidised by the public sphere, the civil society (churches, sponsors). Apart from public broadcasting and parts of the public information system, and, at least initially, Internet services, media policy has been built on the idea of market regulation, that is in practice advertising, to promote a wide distribution of the press, where this is the case. Since this structure is the primary factor behind the monopolisation trends in the commercial, advertising-dependent, media (private or public), it is obvious that intervention will have to be rather far-reaching to change this balance.

An attractive, but sometimes technically difficult, instrument for intervening in markets such as drugs (alcohol and tobacco) or oil is taxation. Also taxation of the advertising market is attractive – by virtue of its huge size - for public decision-makers, but often strongly resented by the industry, including journalists and other professional bodies, since tariffs allow for exemp-
tions and political management. Technological change and globalisation add to the complications of such systems. Advertising taxes exist in several countries, but are applied in various manners, for different media. The simplest advertising tax is levied directly at the source of the media outlet itself, as a certain proportion of the revenue for the newspaper, television or radio channel, website owners or producers. For example, in the Swedish case, the tax in the press sector is formally a flat-rate tax, but the smallest newspapers benefit from deductions.

Despite its technical complexity such a tax might be adapted, generalised and put into operation for other media than newspapers. Also the VAT system allows for a flexibility of going into various levels of production, using deductions etc. The European Union allows different levels for different kinds of products, the press benefitting, in Sweden, from the lowest rate.

What is not, to my knowledge, practised, however, is a more systematic differentiation, such as a progressive rate of taxation. Progressivity of taxation may not be the fashion of the day, nevertheless it might serve as a rather strong instrument to intervene in the distribution of income, provided it is accompanied by sufficient safeguards and does not leave too many openings for evasion, margin effects etc. Like all taxation, just as VAT, or ordinary income tax, advertising tax has its snags, linked to the possibilities of evasion, on one hand and the desire not to stifle economic dynamism on the other. A construction along the lines of the VAT, where deduction is possible for all but the last link in the chain of tax payers, might to some extent mitigate this problem.

As mentioned, a system equivalent to progressive advertising tax was already practised in the first Swedish scheme of concessions to commercial television, although it was labelled a concession fee.

It is difficult to foresee exactly the effects of progressive advertising tax on the media structure. Also, it is, necessarily, a tax which to some degree strikes more towards traditional national media outlets than for example the Internet, or media that are under jurisdictions outside their national advertising target audiences. Satellite television was the primary example, and obviously Internet is an even more radical trans-national medium, albeit subject to possible national interventions. A monopolistic development, due to the dominance of one actor on the advertising market, is likely to be delayed or reduced if interventions of this more radical nature were implemented. As a negative comparison, the end of material resource restrictions, such as for printing paper after the Second World War, significantly spurred competition between newspapers, eliminating obstacles for more affluent newspapers to secure dominance over advertising markets. Wartime or crisis measures are by nature more radical and yet more acceptable to larger segments of the population, including the business sector. This is not necessarily the case in a time of deregulation, liberalisation and opening of markets... but it might turn up to be one efficient remedy required to save pluralism in some of the traditional media sectors, which still dominate the moulding of opinions in basic political respects.

Production subventions vs. consumer subventions – subsidizing “food for thought”

One measure to promote a particular economic activity, often contested and sometimes rather short-termed, is subsidising producers of a certain good. Subsidies distort competition and therefore are not generally tolerated in the long run in free market economies, by example EU regulations. Still, it is a characteristic of cultural production, perhaps even a definition of cultural policies, that such systems are widely practised. And in fact, the border-line between public necessary obligations, paid for by the tax-payers, and subsidies to production of certain goods and services on a market is not evident. That goes for justice, military, health, research, education, legal systems, the arts, sometimes religion— and they are also accepted in the media sector, provided they are constructed in a non-discriminatory manner. Practice is however spurious, as the frequent interventions of private commercial broadcasting against public service broadcasting demonstrate. The media, characteristically, are situated in a kind of intermediary zone, as far as

396 Using a mixture of Bourdieu’s and Cassirer’s categories of cultural production/symbolic form.
EU regulation is concerned, not being exempt from harmonization (not being considered part of culture), but still being included in special regulations (such as the Amsterdam Treaty paragraph on public service broadcasting397), separating them from other goods and services. Also the proposed legislation for restrictions on media ownership (though never accepted) showed that the media in some aspects belong to the zone of “cultural exception”.

State subventions to production are surrounded by strict EU restrictions, and areas hitherto dominated by public sectors, are increasingly exposed to privatisation and marketisation – such as education, health, transport and communication systems etc. Military, justice and police are still, in Europe, predominantly public monopolies, but the evolution of private security firms, and, in the US, private prisons and military assistance services, demonstrate that not even these most intimate spheres of the Nightwatch state are excluded from privatisation. One might see this as a step back to feudalism – private armies or police forces were the backbone of the feudal system, and such forces exist in many parts of the world, in war zones of Latin America, Africa for example, but also as a major part of the US occupational forces in Iraq.

Subventions to the consumer do not really face the same difficulties, from the regulatory point of view, since in these models the markets are not distorted in the same manner, but, on the contrary, encouraged. The classical, omnipresent, example of this model is the tax-subvention to staff luncheons or meals, by lunch cheques, paid partly by the employer up to a certain level of cost.

Such systems have the character of a special currency, accepted just for certain goods and services, in certain areas. It is “liquid” currency, but not as liquid as ordinary currency, since it is not accepted for all goods and services, and not necessarily by all traders. The Communist states in Europe excelled in coupon or cheque systems, for tourists and for those who got contributions in hard currencies sent from abroad, and sometimes for the ruling class of the party or state nomenclature. The reason for this practice was to separate the official, inconvertible, currency from external hard currencies, since the circulation of external currencies, if too common, would overturn the entire pricing system of the planned economy itself. It actually opened a sector of the economy only available for hard currencies, not only consumption goods in special shops (Beriozka or PKO) but also capital commodities like housing, cars etc. But also, on the other end of the scale, the use of “coupons” in market economies has been a common practice in social aid programmes. Drop-outs or addicts are not entrusted with ordinary money, but are given coupons, sometimes only valid in certain shops for basic equipment, clothing etc.

The idea of reserving certain resources for the consumption of specified goods and services is thus rather well established, even in well functioning market, or mixed, economies, such as those of Western Europe. The introduction of new cheques for new areas would accordingly not meet with any major problems of principle. Actually proposals of this kind come from diverse political camps, right and left. General approaches of this kind have been suggested, and practised, for social service programmes as a whole, and for education and culture – with the explicit aim of transferring production of these services to the private sector, while still maintaining public responsibility for a reasonable level of access to everyone398.

The idea is that, instead of cultural policy measures directed to particular institutions or tastes, the citizen should be given free choice, subsidized by a certain amount of cheques for this sector. This model might be extended to the media. Apart from production support, the media/culture sector has also long-standing traditions of regulation of markets in the retail segment: in France book prices are still regulated (often printed on the back of the books). The problem, seen from those segments of the market operators who benefit from advertising, is of course that such cheques would eliminate their comparative advantage. Advertising is, from a strict con-

397 Just as the cited, much older, regulation on public service broadcasting in the European Human Rights Convention.
398 In Sweden both right-wing economists (e.g. Danne Nordling in “Saco”, the union of professionals with higher education), advocated this model for social services in general, and left-wing interventions (e.g. Richard Murray) for cultural goods and services.
sumer’s point of view, one other kind of subvention to media – “dumping” the price of the media product to the consumer, giving a distorted image of the cost of the product and, worse, forcing other producers who do not have the advantage of many advertisers, to follow, with the well-known results... The consumer might be happy, having to pay less or nothing for the product, but on the other hand “nothing is free”, and costs are covered in some other way – and ultimately the consumer loses some of her or his power of choosing, since someone else has chosen the product for sponsoring.

“Cheque” systems thus satisfy both public interests of intervening for the benefit of the consumers and of rectifying market distortions resulting from advertising on the media market. Strictly speaking, competition would therefore be promoted between actors in the same market, not hampered. This view on advertising would be a parallel to the EU view on state support to companies: advertising could be classified as an illicit form of subvention, looking from the point of view of the final user of the media product.

This is, obviously, not the end of the story. Media buyers will have to pay more for their un-subsidised products, and tax-payers will have to pay for the “coupons” ... In the end, logically, such schemes must be measured against the public expenditure for diverse purposes – if “media food for thought” is not judged as privileged an objective of public policies as lunch subventions, it could be financed by other, more ordinary, tax income. In the opposite case, consequently, should these consumption support policies be adopted, media will not necessarily be less sold than today, just as lunch-cheque systems have promoted competition and expansion of lunch restaurants.

“Gratis-media” and competition

In wealthy developed, and also some less wealthy, societies, many products are distributed without any active individual consumer choice in terms of paying for the products. In the cultural sector there is a rather wide selection of free-copy newspapers, free-to-the-air broadcasting (public or private), Web productions, state financed media or other cultural offers, like free-entry museums, private or organisation donor-financed institutions, like the Smithsonian institutions in Washington etc. In other sectors public services are offered for free or at very low cost in many countries, at least periodically or partially, like education and health care. Some of these activities would of course continue to live a comfortable life, undisturbed by an introduction of cheque systems. But obviously, free-copy newspapers, which worry a lot of traditional newspaper companies and journalists today, would have to compete on different conditions — since the subsidized newspapers would not actually be more expensive to the cheque-using consumer and advertising would be taxed much more heavily. Advertising-funded products would therefore be much less competitive. A possible complaint from the free-copy press to the EU Court would probably fail, since competition is not actually distorted by the introduction of general advertising taxes (even of a progressive type) and general subvention regulations for cultural products. Even EU regulations of state subsidies tolerate cultural policies and prohibits only discriminatory subventions. A system such as the one sketched above is, speaking in liberal terms, primarily a system of market correction and promotion of competition.

Free-copy newspapers (the most successful of them being Kinnevik’s “Metro”) represent, in an interesting sense, a paradox of “commercialism”. Since the entire production is paid for by the advertisers, commercial interests determine the results and viability of this kind of media. On the other hand, precisely the lack of consumer’s individual choice, in paying for the product, also liberates the producer from taking “commercial” considerations, in the sense of producing content which is supposed to be “popular”. The very fact of distributing these products for free, is supposed, under certain minimal quality conditions, to be sufficient to attract readers – and readers, not buyers, are the only thing that matters to the advertisers. So the producers of these products do not at all, like tabloid scandal press producers, have to adjust to “popular” tastes in their content, such as portrayal of naked women, crime, sexual affairs of politicians, sports, celebrities etc.
And still make a profit — precisely because the readership is vast - and popular in the sense of being non-elite! Philosophically speaking, this challenges the general assumption that the majority of people prefer sex, crime, entertainment and sports in the media read by them, in some sense quite voluntarily. The “normal” buyer might be precisely the guy who wants to read about sex, crime, entertainment and gentlemen’s football, but this is another story. Is buying more “authentic” than looking or reading? So far nobody has, to my knowledge, tested the combination of a sex—etc. (Eros-and-Thanatos…) and gratis newspaper. It might come but the history so far is intriguing.

Metro or 20 Minutes (Paris) are wonders of seriousness, if compared to The Sun or Bild-Zeitung, and still Metro is much more (100 %) “commercial” in the sense of being totally dependent on advertising. Metro shares this aspect of its content with the least commercial of all media, viz. the state-owned public broadcasting! Les extrêmes se touchent!

In one sense, the paradox of the “commercialism” of the free media, reproduces the general theoretical paradox of competition: as soon as competition has “succeeded”, it has failed, producing a monopoly…. The idea of a new, consumer-oriented, cultural subvention-and-taxation system is likely to provoke outrage among the interests behind dominant media companies, using the rhetoric of free markets and sovereign consumer choice.

Beside general problems pertaining to the subvention of production of media – linked to the character of media as commercial products, in distinction from subventions of the arts or cultural heritage, there are quite tricky technical problems related to the equilibrium necessary to reach, between efficiency and illicit distortion of competition (according to EU regulations). These problems have led to a reduced faith in media production subvention systems and to their abolition in most countries. In the few countries which still retain them (like Norway and Sweden) their character of being a postponement of more permanent solutions (that is, monopolisation is a bit slower) is becoming clearer, and consequently disillusionment is spreading as to the viability of the system.399

Public ownership and subventions

Another course of action, as unfashionable as tax progressivity in the eyes of dogmatic neo-(or old-fashioned laissez-faire)liberal ideologues, is public ownership of media, just as public ownership of business companies. Still public ownership, partial or total, in various forms, remains in many areas as efficient and competitive as private ownership, notably in situations like the recent development, where short-sighted “shareholders’ interests” (mostly pension funds) tend to distort business activities, away from sound productive aspects to pure speculation in financial transactions.400

This kind of intervention might be seen as an extreme case of production subvention system – dependent on whether the public ownership is supposed to be on economically self-sufficient terms or not, but also as a rather standard ingredient in a market economy, where a range of diverse forms exist for accountable and profit-making public economic activities, for example, in the media or cultural sector, ranging from complete ownership to looser control:

- they might be financed just as “commercially” as private companies, by advertising, pay-per-view, subscription fees, sponsoring or voluntary contributions,
- public trusts or trust-owned companies, funded by tax or license fees, the latter being the most common model in cultural production (Swedish public broadcasting)
- social non-profit companies, where diverse forms exist or are discussed, where the objective is not profit but still no public subventions are expected

399 The current (Centre-Right) government of Sweden is divided in its support to the existing system, and has made proposals for it partial liquidation, though at present it is being upheld.
400 Susan Strange has already been cited as a political economist, among many others, who have focussed on this development.
• public authorities, which have to be self-financed – classic examples were railways, telecommunication and postal services, but also roads, geological surveys, public maps etc. still offer this kind of model, sometimes mixed with diverse entirely private business, on various levels of activities

• Regulated public activities: examples are diverse semi-public associations in the legal area (lawyers’ guilds), collecting societies etc.

Public ownership might be considered a consumption subvention but is rather a collective form for payment: for example public broadcasting paid for by ordinary taxes (as is the case in the Netherlands today) is “free” for everyone, as are libraries in most countries as well, in the wealthy part of the world. In this case competition is set aside, sometimes quite consciously, due to a recognized social requirement, such as the German constitutional information obligation of the State (Grundversorgungsverpflichtung) as well as in the field of traditional cultural policy and much of education and scientific research. The public institutions select, by one or the other mechanism, better or not related to goals of public taste, education, scientific progress, etc. material offered in this sector. And the marginal cost of use of public services tends generally to be low, though the relation between collective payment and individual fees is difficult to generalize. The varieties of choice and pluralism of public supply would then have to be catered for inside these public companies, trusts, institutions or the like. Dissatisfaction with the supply shows itself in various ways, by competition from private sources preferred, but also by public debates which might lead to changes, either in the concrete supply or, following general elections and political changes, in policies for programming etc. Examples of these changes are legio. It is, actually, difficult to show that this kind of feed-back structure is, as a whole, in a genuinely democratic society, less responsive to public demand than a commercial market structure. Although it is likely to be slower (but not always!) it is linked to the perspective (long-term or short-term) of the services offered. Satisfaction is gauged against factors like “representativity” – balanced against other factors as “quality”, “innovativeness”, or the rather vague idea of “public interest”, which might differ from representativity. For example, scientific progress or artistic development are rather much out of touch with public demand, notably in a commercial sense. The very idea of a discovery, invention or creation is to a great deal a counterpole to public or economic demand. Demand is a quantitative notion, in the calculable economic sense at least – very much linked to probability in a statistical sense. Creation, invention and discovery are notions, which rest upon unexpected, in-calculable - and improbable - events.

Obviously public ownership of cultural production resources, including media, does not predetermine these “innovative” qualities – but it does not either exclude them any more than private ownership or control. The history of great artistic or scholarly feats does neither exclude personalities supported by kings, nor religious potentates or rich merchants. Public ownership might leave space for mistakes, and perhaps also therefore creativity and experimentation – a university does not immediately fire its professors, because their results are lacking or refuted, or not accepted by peers, while an artist who could not sell her products is just let at her own.

Public ownership in cultural production being rather uncontroversial, as far as the arts or cultural heritage are concerned, but for the media the matter has been different, due, naturally, to bad experience in authoritarian or dictatorial states. The remarkable, and even glorious, exception is however public broadcasting, which, though differently in different countries, still satisfies a number of diverse demands without being subject to political control. Public ownership of the press is, as noted, not negligible, but concerns, with some very rare exceptions, periodical press published by offices, ministries, agencies or the like. It is however notable that non-profit ownership, though on commercial or semi-commercial terms, is still frequent in the press. Newspapers

401 Cf. Jevons, William Stanley, *The theory of political economy*. Recent experience from a period of free entry to state museums in Sweden shows drastic changes in the number of visitors before, during, and after the free-entry exercise.

402 Cf. the discussion on “popularity” vs. purchases above.
are published despite huge losses, by organisations403, like business groups, churches, political parties etc. And some newspapers, though very few, are owned by their staff (wholly or partially) – and even individual capitalists are prepared to carry losses in publishing press titles (Rothschild in Paris is one fresh example, for *Libération*, Stenbeck in Sweden was another).

Bearing this fact in mind one might ask why the idea of public service newspapers and other information outlets have not won wider acceptance in democratic mixed-economy societies. One possible change of attitude is perhaps implicit by the tremendous, and not very much challenged, success of the websites of the big public broadcasting corporations, first and foremost the BBC, but also similar sites in most European countries. This development opens up for new forms of public engagement in the media structure. Since the Internet is not completely commercialised, but still a predominantly public and free service, provided you have money and competence enough to access its supply, by way of a computer, the idea of publicly owned news and other media services might actually have a brighter future.

It is difficult to see why the public sector, the State, local or regional authorities, international bodies, or communities like the EU, should not be allowed to engage in the media sector, and equip themselves with sufficiently competent structures (“arms-length mechanisms”) to avoid the development of propaganda media. Considering the ongoing monopolisation of the private daily press, it is simply not credible to say that the freedom of information precludes public engagement, in a democratic society. It is more difficult to the forms of this engagement – whether for example the lack of advertising income should also imply that other forms of subventions should be excluded: that is how competition on equal terms should be judged, taking into account the diverse markets (consumer and advertiser) which mix, or distort, each other, in the media sector.

**State-supported media**

What has been suggested as far as ownership is concerned goes also for weaker forms of public interventions, such as subventions, joint ventures, regulations, etc. The argument against public (state, regional, local, EU) interventions in the cultural production sphere, and the regulations for consumption, is basically the risk of abuse of concentration of power, political or other. As long as public governance is democratically accountable, responsive, responsible and minimally participatory, the danger of abuse of power is not different from that of the private sector or civil society (organisations, churches, orders, diverse networks of social capital accumulations…) and the same kinds of safeguards have to be installed. As far as state subventions in a competitive market are concerned, EU and international trade regulations have set a framework which established a sort of general exception for the cultural sphere - but for how long and under which definitions remains to be seen. The battle is going on in the global sphere (GATS, MAI etc.), and in the European context the market and competition-oriented regulations network set very strict limits, as soon as economically important sectors of the economy are touched – and the media are definitely such a sector. The intermediary status of media regulation is visible in the references to “audio-visual production” in the EU Treaty Article 151, excepting cultural policies from harmonisation of regulations, while at the same time no exception to harmonisation is made for the media in general. Several directives have been adopted. The Amsterdam Treaty Protocol has been mentioned, providing for public service broadcasting – its interpretation is, however, not beyond doubt.

Therefore, to recall, public production of media is rather locked up in the commercial structure – much more than public consumption support, although this obviously affects the competition structure as well. The salient point – justifying the distinction in political approaches

403 An interesting example is the Swedish Svenska Dagbladet which has practically throughout the last 50 years always making a deficit, but subventioned, extremely loyally and with great sacrifice, by the business organisations and most important capitalist family Wallenberg.
- is that this takes place without prejudice to one or the other producer of goods and services, at least in normal cases. This kind of support is thus in this sense “market-adapted”.

Regulations of the media market

The approach to intervention in economic life favoured in most international and national fora at least in peaceful times is regulation – albeit of a rather general nature: the most trendy concept is “rules of the game”\(^404\). That is, intervention is not really aimed at changing the relationship between diverse actors, big or small, in the economic context regulated, but rather at facilitating the access to the market and some kind of “fair” competition.

Essentially, this means letting the strongest actor win, though restricting in some degree the methods permitted in this combat. As has been noted already, there is a grey zone: the regulatory approach might in borderline cases be equivalent to direct interventions. It is difficult to point at any specific general rule for deciding when the step from general regulation (“game-rules”) to \(\text{ad hoc}\) provisions is taken. In the media sector, Berlusconi’s media legislation in Italy, designed to fit his own business interests, Tony Blair’s changes of British media regulations, manifestly satisfying desires from News Corp., or Swedish regulations on press subsidies in some selected areas\(^403\) might be cited as examples. The question is whether not, at a closer look, nearly every kind of media legislation is designed so as not to interfere too much with important national media company interests\(^406\).

Competition authorities and media freedom

In most debates on media concentration and monopolisation, both regarding legislation and implementation, processes reference is made to competition, a central concern of the European Union.

Varieties of competition

In the context of cultural production reference has already been made to different forms of competition, such as pure business or economic competition and a more “mental” or “immaterial” (ideal, social, cultural) competition. This relates, of course, to Bourdieu’s (and Dagerman’s!) categorisations of capital as being of diverse kinds, social, cultural, economic etc. The order of these categories is not always fixed; sometimes cultural capital seems to be part of the social etc.

For example, even if a daily newspaper is not the most successful in business competition terms (it might even be losing money to its owners), it might be counted as the unrivalled No 1 in terms of prestige and having also a readership which is influential beyond its figures of sale or economic strength. In the arts – as already noted – the index of quality (in one of the many senses of this term\(^405\)) is sometimes the reverse of the index of market share, or popularity – Bourdieu suggests that kind of inverse relationship in \textit{On Television}. Indices of quality are very often used independently of popular appeal – no or very few juries of prestigious literary or any other artistic prizes would admit that sales figures or market shares have an impact of the choice of prize-winners. Although in real life the history of literature or music might also be the history of the winners of sales shares, this is rarely an index of the position of the artist in historical contexts or in contemporary criticism, that is, her or his cultural capital.

On the other hand, quality indices and high prestige are normally also \textit{marketing} arguments in an ordinary commercial sense – although not always convincing to the buyer of the product, as

\(^{404}\) Cf above for the background to the globalisation, privatisation, marketisation, deregulation….In the EU draft - never presented - directive om media concentration the key concept was “level playing field”.

\(^{405}\) (Haparanda, Oland, Gotland)

\(^{406}\) To continue the series: Hersant group interests seem well fitted into French legislation, Sehisted into Norwegian, Bertelsmann into German, etc. etc.

\(^{407}\) E g “most sold”, “most cited”, “sold to ordinary people, not the elite”, “used by the lower strata of the population”, “countryside based” etc.
is well illustrated by the poor economies of many “high-brow” quality broadsheet newspapers: The Independent, Le Monde, Libération, Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet have all been in serious economic troubles. And posthumous fame did not save Van Gogh from misery, nor Spinoza. Those diverse notions of competition, at a number of levels and of different kinds, are better described in sociology, social psychology or anthropology than economics. Only a select few, economic factors are treated by actual legislation, national or European.

The prestige capital of cultural products – and consequently its competitiveness in “immaterial” terms (at least), might nevertheless also be worth considerable economic capital. This is illustrated by the trade in rights, which is becoming a growingly important part of the cultural market, even at the level of future productions - film rights represented an extraordinarily volatile and ethereal asset – estimated officially, by companies (more or less honest) or by desperate tax authorities for example – in billions of Euros or dollars. The mere association by contract of a famous script writer, producer or music writer might endow a film project with a considerable “expected value”, though perhaps never cashed in.

In sum: competition is not only a matter of business or economic capital, but might well be a combination of diverse forms of assets or capital, in a truly Bourdieu-an manner.

Editorial competition

One aspect of this broader aspect of competition is particularly important to the media sector and somewhat different from the competition involving general cultural capital factors as prestige etc. as intertwined with economic capital. Though media ownership is tending towards reduction of the number of owners in traditional media (press, radio, TV) Internet has contributed a trend in the reverse sense. The idea of “compensation” by way of “internal pluralism” has already been mentioned, but there is also an organisational aspect, which deserves attention – this might also be labelled in economic terms “diversification” inside business groups. Diversification is often, in contemporary economic set-ups, linked to independent economic responsibilities - one corporate group is subdivided into business units, each having to respond to profit claims from the owners. Although a concentration of ownership of a media product category leaves the overall economic control in fewer hands, the diversification interest of the remaining greater group might often result in a diversity of responsibility on the production level.

Concretely, Newspaper A buys Newspaper B, but retains the central editorial unit for B, simply because it is profitable, since Newspaper B has its main focus of distribution on a particular area, or a particular target group. Editorial units within the same company might, at least to some degree, engage in a competition with each other. It remains to be seen, however, if the owners of the respective companies would let this competition affect the basic strategies of the company, including eventual political objectives. It remains to be seen, too, which is the most fundamental interest: long-range (often political) or short-range – the bottom lines of corporations. Generalisations are not really plausible in this context, and some interesting changes are taking place, but it seems that strategic, that is, long-term interests, are not easily wavered, even if costs on a short term might be rather high. Owners might be rather willing to accept losses on a short term, for profits in the long run.

---

408 The Social Democratic small newspaper Folkbladet in Norrköping, Sweden, was bought by the bigger Norrköpings Tidningar, conservative, but the title, the editorial unit and the political affiliation of the smaller paper continued to exist, since the newspaper was primarily sold 1) in a smaller agglomeration with a strong working class population and 2) to younger men interested in sports, two areas where the bigger newspaper was weaker. The Swedish subvention system for newspapers in a weak market position also continued to give support to the small newspaper, despite its integration in one monopoly company for the region – simply because the subsidy system is directed towards the editorial diversity. The same model has been practised for several of the remaining Social Democratic newspapers. Thus competition has, in this context lost its economic sense, becoming a kind of “ideal” or political competition inside a monopoly in the economic sense. Whether this kind of competition merits its name is, naturally, highly doubtful – and probably the practise referred to announces the end of the entire subsidy scheme, sooner or later. The negotiations between the buyer of the small newspaper, the State Press Subsidy Authority - where political parties are represented, local political interests etc. are good examples of the kind of interrelations which probably any orthodox market economy believer abhors.
Labour market, working conditions and pluralism of cultural production

JOURNALISM AND CONCENTRATION OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP - A RE-EXAMINATION OF BOURDIEU’S “ON TELEVISION”

Professionalisation of media workers has on one hand been regarded as a means of evading some of the negative consequences of monopolisation of ownership in media production – thus largely a positive view and, on the other hand, the term “journalism” has been coined as a negative concept denoting an undue influence from the journalistic “guild” or fraternity on society as a whole – for Bourdieu in particular, but also for the defendants of non-interventionism in media policies. Bourdieu’s criticism dealt with the presentation of research results on social conditions and relations, in the public sphere. But the issue is broader than that: it might be termed the dispute over the balance between “external” power over cultural production and “internal” power in cultural production. The issue of media workers and their power, vis-à-vis the external structures is a special case of this broader issue. Bourdieu’s choice of words: a “grasp of power” – the German term “Machtübernahme” probably gives a more adequate association implies, rightly, also a political aspect. The theoretical demarcation between “structurally” and “individually” oriented analyses of social and historical contexts also involves, usually, this political aspect – a well-known and illustrative example of the interplay between scholarly work and ideological positions. Philosophically speaking, issues of the autonomy of persons/actors vis-à-vis their environment (social, biological etc.) – issues related to the problem of “free will” and responsibility in moral philosophy – appear at the roots of this discussion or demarcation line.

Both views are neither entirely evident, nor entirely false, in the specific, as well as the general case. The special case of the media – involving people who create immaterial objects, such as news, programmes, entertainment etc.- within the framework of different social organisations (private, public, “civil society”) is a model of this theoretical, political, and practical complexity.

First: In situations where owners and political power-holders exercise pressure on journalists and other media workers to refrain from criticism and scrutiny of social, economic or political abuses of power, a professional code of conduct or honour, strong professional unions and high social status, as well as cohesion in the profession, offer protection and thus serve the interests of the general public.

Second: On the other hand, the same strong cohesion, strong codes of conducts, unions and “fraternities” etc. may also have the adverse effect, albeit still preserving independence vis-à-vis owners and political interests. Students of journalism are taught internal standards and values of news and other kinds of media production – values which pervade their professional traditions of making good stories, sensations, selling news, hot stuff, large-audience entertainment etc. These values to a great extent diverge from what is customarily regarded as primary public interests in balanced and adequate information, offering a basis for politically important choices etc.

Journalistic values of “breaking the news”, often linked to winning personal reputation as a star are thus not always compatible with “the public interest”. Opinion polls of confidence among the general public in journalists and media confirm this – to say that trust in news media

409 The Norwegian legislation now integrates the declaration of editorial independence (“Redaktørplakaten”) – a measure, which might be said to transform all journalism to a kind of public service.
410 “L’emprise du journalisme” is the title of the article attached to “On Television”
v Flame considerably, over time and for different media, and for different owners of media (state-run or private) is an understatement.

The interest of high circulation and profits for the owners might often be integrated into the ordinary conduct and values of media workers – to the detriment of other values as personal integrity of citizens (notably “celebrities”), and interests like cohesion of ethnically or socially diverse societies etc.

And, perhaps less noted: the interest of the professional cohesion and common values might also cross borders between employer/owner and employed, thus blurring the borderline of differences of interest between profit-making and “serving the public”. Newspaper and other media organisations tend to take a generalized view of their social role – owners and directors of media corporations expressing views that are also subscribed to by journalist organisations. One reason for this is, naturally, that editors-in-chief and other high executives of media are often themselves journalists, and that there are career prospects for ordinary journalists inside corporations, whereby, naturally, “loyalty” to the corporation is primary to the loyalty to the journalistic ethos or the public interest. This situation is exacerbated by recent developments where in many cases – the media are in an analogous situation to other fields of cultural production (the arts institutions, institutions of research and higher education) - the economic priorities and concentration of ownership have enabled economic controllers and directors to take the lead over publishers and content producers inside the media. In some cases the roles are amalgamated, but clearly a growing influence from the managers over the production of cultural content is a reality.

The last-mentioned development, noted by Bourdieu, in On Television, though en passant, transgresses the boundary just suggested between “internal” and “external” conditions of media production.

Empirically, it seems that the positive evaluation of the professionalisation of media workers as a counterbalancing force to power concentration in the external sense is difficult to corroborate: it would actually coincide with a positive assessment of a growth of “internal pluralism” in the media. This in its turn presupposes a final judgement on the extremely difficult issue as to whether the monopolisation of media, for example daily newspapers in their respective markets, has lead to a reduced pluralism in the space of opinion as a whole or not. I am inclined to evaluate, as a whole, the influence of professionalisation of the media in the Western capitalist wealthy countries as not sufficient or even likely to counterbalance negative consequences of concentration of ownership. I do not, however, share the convictions or moral pathos of Bourdieu, either, that the journalistic profession is to blame for the kind of transfer of power between diverse sectors of cultural production. I do, in this respect, rather side with the “externalists” rather than the “internalists”, in my analysis of the remedies to be introduced for solving this problem.

Evaluations of this kind are, as indicated already, complex and rarely uncontroversial. Most likely the debate will continue, from diverse political points of view – where politically controversial issues will mark some fields where specific facts are available. One such example seems to be the debates in 2006 in France and the Netherlands over the proposed treaty for the European Union – where a remarkable gap between the media and public opinion as a whole was observed. A CSA examination in France for example\(^{411}\) showed that, as a whole, the journalistic profession, the owners of the media (private and public) and public authorities shared the same political views and did not really present a balanced forum for debate. Similar examinations have been made of the US media in the preparations for the US/UK attack on Iraq and the beginning of the period of occupation.

The subject of “media accountability” (cf. Bertrand & Petersson) has become an important issue on the agenda of both media politics and the relations between media and their readers and audiences.

\(^{411}\) Conseil Supérieur Audiovisuel, The French State radio and television monitoring authority
Professional codes of conduct have provided a protection in undemocratic states, towards too obvious exaggerations, public lies or propaganda, in situations of censorship and self-censorship. The very existence of professional training in universities, or schools as well as of societies where journalists meet and discuss – privately or publicly – also lead to “trickle-down effects” on public opinion, as was the case in the old Soviet power bloc, and as is also clear in for example Middle East authoritarian or dictatorial states. The rather encouraging corollary is that, when political pressure diminishes, some outlet already prepared a fairer picture of political, cultural and social situations and conflicts. Even if newspapers are being closed down, Internet sites blocked (as for example in China and Iran today, or by sheer market mechanisms in the entire capitalist world) a growing media competence, it seems inevitably, favours democratic developments, even taking all pessimistic dystopies of commercial media decay into account. Nobel Prize Peace laureate and head of Unesco’s commission for the study of international communication Sean MacBride underlined the irresistible force of public opinion – on the background of Khomeiny’s overthrow of the Shah dictatorship in Iran in 1973 – irrespective of whether the system of government is democratic or authoritarian.

Examining media workers’ working conditions

One aspect for further study is, at this point, worth highlighting, viz. the more systematic and continuous documentation of the real working conditions of media workers – along with the entire mass of people engaged in cultural production. What has been said about the professionalisation in its different aspects has its counterpart in the real working conditions, in a market characterized by both a fragmentisation of news and other media sources (blogs, websites etc.) and concentration of power over markets, dominated by traditional media outlets.

Journalists have had quite a lot of attention to their physical risks and pressures on their personal liberties, in dictatorial regimes, in war situations etc. Figures are regularly published and debated on how many journalists who have been kidnapped, killed or tortured, and constant public attention has – for example in Iraq – been upheld for some individual cases of kidnapping.

But the grey realities of the everyday situation of media workers in peaceful societies is less often brought to the attention of scholars and public opinion. Still this situation changes dramatically, in a number of aspects. Specifically the economic development of traditional media – in terms of growing control over production from a rapidly shrinking number of large dominant corporations and groups – has not really been discussed nor documented as far as its consequences for working conditions of those employed or working for these groups (free-lance, stringers etc.).

The recurrent theme of this study – concentration of ownership/control over traditional media production – renders the choice of employment for media workers slender, if not non-existent. Depending of the specialties of the individual worker there will be just one or two employers offered on local markets, and often also in larger markets.

The restructuration of labour markets in present economies means that very few new entrants on these markets can envisage stable employment, and thus are mostly working on temporary assignments, free-lance-contracts etc.

What does concentration of ownership imply for the competition between media workers for employment or work under other conditions? And does it mean – which is what might be expected – a larger degree of compliance with not only professionally uncontroversial norms and values, but also obedience to the values (political, ideological etc.) of media owners or controllers as well as their social spheres?

If there are two or three large media groups which include art reviews, cultural criticism and a political debate on a relatively advanced level, what kind of choice does a cultural or politi-

---

412 for example in presenting his commission in Stockholm 1978, an occasion at which I happened to be present as a young secretary of the Swedish National Commission for Unesco
cal journalist have, notably if her or his values diverge from those of the large capital interests – or for that matter dominant political public stances? Is an independent stance to these interests and their owners at all possible? One notorious case was the pressure put on the editor-in-chief for culture of Sweden’s most prestigious daily morning paper Dagens Nyheter to sign a contract including a clause prohibiting criticism towards the corporation and its owner family and top executives. Other famous cases are the pressures put from the French (right-wing) president Sarkozy on the owner of Paris Match (his close friend, the most influential French media tycoon Lagardère) during the presidential election campaign, to fire its editor-in-chief, after the magazine had published a photo of his (then) wife and her lover, at a time when Sarkozy himself had left his wife for another woman…

This is, probably, only the top of the iceberg. As centred on rather trivial gossip and scandals as it might seem, it symbolizes the complications of relationships between media producers and controllers, obviously more decisive in a situation of monopolistic tendencies. Documentation of such clashes is certainly a task for continuous research and follow-up for any monitoring effort of cultural production, equivalent to the studies of public trust in the media, which are regularly undertaken by opinion institutes and/or media researchers. It would supplement the assessment of trust with some elements of causes and deeper layers of the structure. Professional ethos, traditions and values as well as socialisation practices, including education and on-the-job training are parts of this structure, intertwined with external factors like ownership, investment controls, employment practices, political affiliations, economic ties, and, of course, everything which might be included in a scheme of cultural and social capital.

Bourdieu’s attack on the journalistic “Machtführung” might in this way be balanced by a more complex analysis of the structure of this central part of cultural production – including also an analysis of ownership strategies and structures, their liaisons with political strategies, subcultures and economic interest groups or other social webs. The media in more recent structures, also including non-professional production in weblogs and similar outlets, tend on the other hand to be “deregulated” also from professional codes of conduct – sometimes constituting a new kind of breakthrough for irregular news and debate interventions.

The dream of neutrality
The criticism of the power of journalists has emanated in several proposals aiming at eliminating the intervention of professional media workers between the “facts” and the public. Two major trends of this ambition might be discerned.

“Going unplugged” 1: unedited news
A point of view not seldom advanced by both politicians, the general public and scholars – and in some sense underlying Bourdieu’s attack on “journalism” – is the idea of a remedy to the situation depicted by Bourdieu, by way of the establishment of a new sort of public service in the field of information, parallel to public cultural production of other kinds, such as in the arts institutions, the legal system, education, scientific research and erudition. This service would eliminate the need of intermediates between the audience and the purveyors of, for example, scholarly information, or political news. It would in this sense also “liberate” the public from the journalistic professional values and, consequently, dominance of the “journalism” in Bourdieu’s sense. The criticism from power-holders, political and economic, have, quite foreseeably, grown as the independence of the public media have lead to more penetrating and investigative journalism, also sometimes exposing the establishment and elites in society.

413 The situation in France, where the intimate relationships between dominant media groups, such as Bouygues, Lagardère and Dassault, and big business, in particular arms and public infrastructure industry on one hand and the right-wing political interests (Sarkozy) on the other is remarkable, just as was the already mentioned alliance between Rupert Murdoch and Tony Blair in Britain.
The background is that journalistic professional values have also penetrated, indisputably, in later decades the public media. Those have developed from semi-official, rather modest or even dull, media to channels with a similar ethos and programme style as other media, albeit preserving a certain pluralism and neutrality in most countries.

Public service broadcasting in its customary shape has, it is well known, a strong support in most European countries, at least in the western and northern part of the continent – the model is of course the BBC. But the new claim for public intervention goes actually further than a demand for the preservation of the public service broadcasting companies – which has lead to the inclusion of this service in the EU Treaty.

The remedy seems to have been found in the idea of “unplugged” or uncommented news. The model is the US C-Span channels, which transmit directly debates from Congress and other official fora, and other contexts.

C-span expresses its own mission as follows: “

C-SPAN is a public service created by the American cable television industry:

To provide C-SPAN’s audience access to the live gavel-to-gavel proceedings of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, and to other forums where public policy is discussed, debated and decided—all without editing, commentary or analysis and with a balanced presentation of points of view;

To provide elected and appointed officials and others who would influence public policy a direct conduit to the audience without filtering or otherwise distorting their points of view;

To provide the audience, through the call-in program, direct access to elected officials, other decision makers and journalists on a frequent and open basis;

To employ production values that accurately convey the business of government rather than distract from it; and to conduct all other aspects of its operations consistent with these principles.

This patently contradictory description (“balanced” and still “without editing”…) might actually serve as a model of the illusion, which pervades some of the pleas for a more neutral or balanced news reporting in general. Editing, commentary or analysis is of course a necessary pre-condition for presenting a “balanced point of view” – though of course direct transmission of some selection of Congress or other proceedings might be valuable for some people, as a documentation. The last sentence, just as the promise not to analyse, will necessarily cater for a rather established view on political processes, actually more difficult to grasp than ordinary (though often biased or distorted) accounts in the media.

Nevertheless, this service (now 3 TV-channels, a web-site and a radio channel), financed by the cable industry is attractive, particularly to politicians, who often feel that they do not penetrate to the ordinary citizen.

A parallel development for the elimination of journalists is typical for much of commercial broadcasting, in the United States and elsewhere. In particular in radio the proportion of spoken messages, apart from commercials, has long tended to diminish or even be more or less eliminated. Many journalists have been replaced by disc jockeys, automatic music transmissions, entertainers or in some cases speakers who (Rush Limbaugh is the classical example) have brought radio services back to one of its roots - actually well exploited by Hitler in the 1930s. Talk radio seems however to regain some of its position in US radio in recent times.

http://www.c-span.org/about/company/index.asp
One of the roots of these trends in the media landscape undoubtedly could be traced in the criticism of “journalism” - reminding of the one launched by Bourdieu. This criticism is, perhaps more commonly, rooted in a general anti-intellectualism, characteristic of many populist movements, on both sides of the political spectrum. Bourdieu would have hated the comparison with Rush Limbaugh, obviously, but his - rather innocent, not to say naïve - approach to the role attributed to television, in the context of his fight with a French educational channel (!) extended to the entire television spectrum, is not without relation to this anti-intellectualist movement, paradoxically.

The reason for the nearly total absence of the C-span kind of media in Europe, is the relatively strong position of public media, though they have adopted some commercial journalistic traditions, as far as style and language.

Going unplugged 2: Citizen’s journalism

Another kind of remedy suggested in many recent discussions goes the other way round: it aims at establishing a kind of “direct” journalism, but in a different sense. The idea is that “anyone” should be able to provide material in media outlets – “anyone” means above all people who have not had any journalistic training or are employed by media companies. In this case it is not a question of letting unlimited space for decision-makers or elite personalities in some publicly available broad media outlets but saluting the establishment of broad facilities for publishing ideas and material over generally available channels, primarily the Internet. Some kind of predecessor existed under the form of “pirate” or community radio (sometimes TV) stations in the period of extension of radio frequencies for general purposes (facilitated by the extension of the technical availability of many more parts of the frequency spectrum, and of the withdrawal of military exclusive control over some part of the frequency spectrum – such as the 100-110 MHZ band).

This idea is realised by the explosion of media outlets on the Internet, such as blogs, chat forums, and other kinds of interactive activities, as well as some other media, produced by readers. This proliferation of media outlets in the digital age facilitates all kinds of “unplugged” transmissions, not only of official parliamentary fora but also of an innumerable amount of interventions in the public debates. The quality and levels of knowledge of this new army of “publishers” are obviously, just as the quality of anyone who expresses herself freely in public or private ordinary discourse radically varying. Nevertheless, this has lead to a new kind of “publicness”, “Öffentlichkeit” in Habermas’ terms. The consequences of this development are as yet difficult to foresee. It might work both negatively and positively for democratic participation in decision-making. For example untransmitted and secluded fora for decision-making may grow in importance, transforming the public bodies to show-places for registration of decisions, rather than real fora for public debates and transparent decision-making. On the other hand not even a very secret society or company inner circle might be assured of the tightness of their information embargos. There are innumerable examples already of bloggers having broken a closed circle, bringing an unfortunate top manager or minister to fall.

Positions, perspectives and objectivity

The problem just touched upon is part of a more general problem, pervading most of contemporary debates on cultural production, including scientific research, first and foremost in the social and cultural sciences. The problem might also be couched in epistemological terms – coming back to what is treated in the introductory sections of this study. Since the media in a large sense are carriers of most of our knowledge, conditions of bridging the gap between producers

415 Actually Bourdieu launched his own editing house Raisons d’agir, cf. Le Monde Diplomatique Oct 07 (article by André Schiffrin).
416 In Stockholm one such weekly newspaper is edited under the title of Readers’ free Journal (Läsarnas frio).
417 In Swedish domestic politics (autumn 2006), the tax-evasions of one minister and the intrusion into a political party database are examples.
(authors), distributors and users of media (cultural) products are also conditions of knowledge. One aspect of these conditions has been formulated by Bourdieu and has already been touched upon – as a problem of “positioning”. A “position” in this sense is the vantage point (illusory or inevitable) in which any of the 6 billion people of the world is situated and from which she or he observes the world and its inhabitants, including its social and cultural structures, things, artifacts and immaterial objects. The problem of positioning has, I recall, been particularly painful in the work of anthropologists (ethnographers), ever since the consciousness of ethnocentrism became explicit, as a consequence of Malinowski’s effort of establishing cultural research as a “science”. (Malinowski 2002/1944).

Media workers, as well as artists and researchers, thus, just like anybody, have one perspective from their position in the natural and social space. And, since most linguistic communication between people, including media workers and scholars, inevitably involves stories, “tales” or narratives, (récits in French, Berichte or Erzählungen in German) – whether in words, images, gestures, presuppositions, takings-for-granted, there is no such thing as an entirely neutral perspective, although a story might well take into account several perspectives, not only one. Obviously, in the most concrete sense, also C-span or other uncommented stories apply an angle or perspective. What is crucial in this respect is that this does not make the “tale” less “objective” in itself. Notably, if “objective” is taken in the literal and necessarily modest sense (which I recommend, as repeatedly noted above) of “being about something else than myself”, in distinction from “being about myself”. Subjective, in the, equally modest, sense of “applying a perspective”, thus does not exclude objective. Objective does not either, in this sense, entail “true”, “neutral” or “impartial” or even less “infallible”. Something might be objectively false, improbable or biased… The idea of neutrality is a matter of degrees and relative to two or more divergent perspectives or points of view, and of presentation. We all know how to select formulations and approaches that are less likely to meet objections, and follow common language, common prejudices, presuppositions or discourses.

In the particular case of the declaration of its mission, C-span expresses quite clearly its own perspective: that of the business of the government. The government might be Republican or Democrat, Communist or National Socialist, but its business is to be conveyed, whether it consists of presidential lies about hidden mass destruction weapons in Iraq or imminent dangers to all Americans from Usama Bin Laden and his gang.

The modest sense of objectivity also gives a chance to knowledge as such: objectivity is a property of discourse (talk, writing, images), which is open for scrutiny, for verification or falsification, proof or refutation. And science has tried to establish diverse methods for establishing truths, proofs etc. on this objective level. On the other hand, subjectivity, at least in the strict sense, is not open for refutation, proofs or control. My experience is mine (or ours), nothing more. From the same experience objectivity is constructed or constituted, checking, calculating, comparing etc. But this comes after subjectivity. Subjective experiences just are not available to objections, but when they are advanced as reasons or grounds, objectivity takes over: I speak of objects, not myself. Subjective experience are firmly anchored in objectivity, in the sense of being meaningful: my experience is normally about something, it is difficult if at all possible to express my experiences (communicate) without reference to other things.

The gist of cultural production is being about something\(^{418}\), whether telling tales about fictive objects or personalities, shaping images, producing news stories or other messages, writing scientific articles, making films, creating norms, applying norms. One might dispute whether creating music, performing music or producing images of an abstract or non-figurative nature also bears this character – indirectly, in the framework of some system of references it is probably mostly the case.

\(^{418}\) This is just a way of expressing both Husserl’s insight about “intentional experience” and Frege’s distinction between Sinn (translated as “sense”) and Bedeutung (translated as “reference”) of expressions.
The media “mediate” – tell things that could not be known directly in the presence of those who communicate, by way of some intervening mechanism, such as letters, paper, books, images, telephone calls etc. In most cases also someone intervenes to operate the media, be it only for mounting a C-span TV-camera in front of a US senator, but still there is intervention. From a position, from a perspective. Thus, media, by definition, are different from direct communication.

**Media houses: Conditions of production and post-production**

Another idea, in addition to professionalisation of media workers and “unplugged” media, sometimes proposed as a protection towards the consequences of ownership concentration, and increasingly implemented in some media structures, is the idea of “media houses” or factories. This means that, although a printing shop, or other physical and business facilities of media production remain in the hands of one operator on the market, the owner of the facilities does not, ideally, intervene in content production. Instead this is the task of several distinct editorial units, benefitting from the “factory” facilities. This model presupposes that the factory as such is financed, some way or other – by sales of products, such as printing services to the editorial units by internal factoring, for example, or by public or organisation funds.

Many examples of this kind of production exist and/or have existed: in the first years after liberation from the Soviet annexation, the Baltic states continued to have some printing shops, formerly under strict party control, as well as other facilities opened for the different products, now independent and with different political affiliations. This situation ended rather rapidly – through foreign capital take-overs (often Scandinavian). But also recently, in Scandinavia, the remainders of the Social Democratic press have mostly been purchased by liberal or right-wing oriented media groups – which continue to publish the Social Democrat newspapers. In Denmark the two largest national newspapers, with different political affiliations, have merged into one publishing house.

So, differently from for example Rupert Murdoch’s media empire, or similar ones in other countries, there is some kind of “intra-corporate pluralism”, thus offering an alternative to the other forms of “internal pluralism”.

It goes without saying that this kind of pluralism is rather fragile – since if the costs for the “deviant” media product begin to increase, a change of business practice and political affiliation is not too difficult to implement for the managers of the corporation. Murdoch’s diverse media outlets – such as *the Sun* and the Fox network may serve as model examples. Examples of intra-corporate pluralism are rather rare, though some of the the most prestigious national newspapers represent this phenomenon in some countries (*Le Monde, the Independent, Politiken, La Repubblica, El Pais, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Washington Post*). In most cases of private media, however, a common political line of thought or action dominates, irrespectively of declarations of independence becoming standard labels. Public media may differ – Italy represented a case of an ideological “truce” in the division of TV channels within the state broadcasting corporation RAI between different political tendencies for a long time – recognizing that one channel was to be “left-wing”, another “right-wing” and the third not defined. Berlusconi, with his own business interests in television, and his ministers from the “Alleanza Nazionale”, that is the successor to the Neo-Fascist party, tried to overturn this balance by nominating his own friends to leading positions.
CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND PLURALISM:
MONOPOLISATION AS THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM

The press is the oldest mass medium, as the term is customarily used. Therefore the press has served as a model in most discussions on power, on public participation in political matters, on freedom and restrictions to content production etc.

Some reservations might be voiced over this position.

One is historical: pamphlets, royal or ecclesiastical decrees, proclamations in churches etc. – and perhaps even paintings and carvings in caves more than 30 000 years ago, although we have difficulties in grasping their meaning - might also qualify for the term mass-medium, disregarding more recent technical facilities of reproduction as the essential criterion of mass-communication. Mass-communication is to some extent independent of mass media, since mass-communication was always organized in societies. Indeed mass-communication might even be regarded as the root of organized society – just as communication is more or less co-extensive to human order in general, or perhaps even being human at all, notably if we restrict communication to linguistic and/or symbolic communication.

Another is related to recent media technology development. Since blogs and other Internet or electronic communication, wired or wire-less, have brought about a radical reorganisation of both interpersonal and multi-personal communication in the last decade, reflection on mass communication is subject to a radically new challenge. Technological change may sometimes divert attention from social structural immobility and vice versa, which means that there is no self-evident perspective or analytic scheme. The analytic attitude should, in this situation, rather be pluralistic itself, that is, allow for and present different perspectives, sometimes linked to predominantly intra-scholarly disciplinary attitudes, but preferably also considering general philosophical and political stances.

Nevertheless, irrespective of these complications, there is good reason to focus on the press when examining problems of pluralism – in the sense outlined here – in relation to major social, economic and cultural changes taking place in the post-cold-war era, perhaps starting with the late 1980-s of perestrojka and glasnost’ in Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, with the “Round Table” in Poland as the turning-point in April 1989 419. The crucial decision taken by the Soviet leadership not to intervene to rescue the power monopoly of the Polish Communists, to allow opposition forces to participate in the elections and, finally not to prevent the fall of the Communist regime after the outcome of this semi-free election, marked the end of the era of cold war between two super-powers. The fall of the Berlin Wall some months later was a symbolic confirmation of this crucial change of position of the Soviet leadership.

Since the Polish elections took place at the same time as the massacre of the Tien-an-men (the “Place of the Heavenly Peace”?) in Beijing, they did not attract the attention of the mass-media as deserved, from a European perspective - a symbolic illustration of the “logic of mass-media” or, more generally, a variety of the “paradox of cognition” discussed above. 420

419 This occasion, rather than the more spectacular fall of the Berlin Wall later the same year, marked the end of the cold war: a Round Table, a negotiation, very dull and peaceful, and undramatic, on the surface level.....
420 This is not the place for a historical comparative analysis of the press in the first week of June 1989 of the Christian era, but it might be the place for analysis or reflection on the general role of the press in the decade and a half since then. Actually, the
The press – in the period described here – was already relegated to a secondary position in the massmediascape, the primary role for news and commentary to current affairs for the large audiences since long being assumed by television in most parts of the world. Some strongholds of the press however still persist, in the richer part of the world, such as Japan and Scandinavia.

Some grounds for taking the press as the model example in studying the conditions of pluralism in cultural production could still be advanced.

1. **Historically**, the emergence of the mass-distributed press coincides with *popular participation* in political decisions, with the emergence of contemporary democracy from the end of the 19th C.

2. The *technology* for extremely quick printing processes in very high number of copies is as essential a break-through to mental development, political participation and communication as the introduction of the art of printing in Europe in the 15th C, broadcasting in the 1920s, or the emergence of the World Wide Web in the 1990s. Of course there are competitors for these break-throughs: telegraph, telephones, television, teleprinter, telefax etc. (the prefix “tele”- might be taken to symbolize the collective institutionalized astonishment in the face of these new products....).

3. The *ownership and control structures* of the press have been established around a hard core, which has shown to be rather resistant to changes and absorbing new media, thus remaining a lasting “estate” in modern (that is 19th-20th C) societies. The hard core consists of solid capitalist corporations, mostly linked to clearly defined business interest groups, and their political representatives, exerting a dominant or very important political influence in most democratic, or for that matter many un-democratic, states.

4. The *role of other actors* in the political life of society and in cultural production are, for better or worse, mostly linked to the press. This is true even in societies, where the press has been considerably weakened in economic terms. The accumulation of *cultural and social capital* in the press sector is still significant, albeit not always coextensive with the economic capital. Concretely this prerogative of the press is still demonstrated in the kind of citations in “breaking the news”-contests. Not seldom it is some correspondent of a newspaper or an investigative journalist who has brought to the attention of the media and the general public one “affair” of corruption or the like. Even rather small elite press outlets might exert considerable influence due to their capacity of acquiring inside information from political circles and business life. The French satirical political weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* is perhaps the most typical example: its campaign against the diamond affairs of the French president Giscard D’Estaing with the African Emperor Bokassa most likely led to the fall of the former421.

These arguments for the leading role of the press even in the world of the World Wide Web and immediate connections in real time by means of electronic media in most important economic and political matters, are also reasons for not letting too easily pass the talk about technology as primary motors of development. They constitute, too, a piece of evidence for not letting economic, let alone economicist, considerations develop into what might be, in slightly Gramsci-Foucauldian terminology, a hegemonic discourse. They might, even, supply evidence for the “idealistic” view proposed in this study, although couched in a quasi-economicist discourse by

---

421 Public oblivion is however merciful sometimes: this did not exclude him from being nominated chairman of the “Convention” designing the new treaty for a constitution of the European Union.).
the use of Bourdieu’s (omnipresent) terms “cultural capital” or “social capital”. Just as ordinary business life is not organised around majority principles, the public “life of the mind”\textsuperscript{422}, or the accumulation and exchange of cultural capital is far from democratically structured\textsuperscript{423}. Therefore, a minority mass medium, in terms of audience and popular appeal, as “quality press” outlets might very well be a dominant medium in terms of influence on political decisions, economic structures etc.

The press is in most democratic societies built upon the principle of private ownership, though not always complete integration into capitalist principles, such as profit-maximisation and expansion. ‘Private ownership’ might also cover ownership by charitable trusts, collectives of workers, organisations of diverse kinds, such as political parties, trade unions etc. For non-daily periodicals private ownership might be less dominant in some select sectors, though very dominant in the “popular” sector. And reversely, market economy conditions, such as free and unhampered competition etc., do not entirely exclude public ownership. On the contrary, in the European Union public ownership is rather frequent in most economic sectors, but subject to the same conditions as private enterprise, exceptions being subject to explicit specifications, as in the regulations on state support \textsuperscript{424}. States actually publish a rich flora of legal journals, magazines and information from public authorities, universities, schools and academies. Today this press flora is supplemented by huge service sites on the Web, of course also produced and edited along journalistic and/or information policy principles.

But still: the daily, and most other press in contemporary societies is overwhelmingly organized as private business companies. Legal regulation of press companies follows, essentially, common business regulations, though legislation of freedom of the media also implies some privileges for press companies, or, conversely, some constraints for their business activities. Otherwise the economic development\textsuperscript{425} of private mass media follows principles of competition leading to, in various stages of market development, reduction or even monopolisation of actors. This process has been documented, and debated, for decades in public discourse, nationally and in international forums such as Unesco, EU and the Council of Europe – but exceptions to concentration processes in the press ownership and control are rare.

The causes of concentration or consolidation – in the case of the press mainly the interaction of two different markets, (sale of the printed product and supply of advertising space respectively), and, generally, double advantages of scale, both reducing the marginal cost of extra copies to a low level, and, at the same time, increasing the attractivity to advertisers.

In most countries this process has lead to a radical reduction of the number of owners and titles in press markets and to local monopolies and divisions of markets, respectively. Competition between newspapers is becoming rare, though monopolistic competition occurs – where for example a local subscribed daily, which dominates a market, faces national dailies, for example single-copy distributed tabloids weeklies or free-copy papers, or, naturally, other media.

This change has been debated for decades, but the magnitude of this earthquake in cultural production structure begins to slide into oblivion. To remind ourselves, we might point at the

\textsuperscript{422} Cf. the title of Hannah Arendt’s last major (post-humously edited, in part) work.

\textsuperscript{423} One might discuss the meanings of all the crucial terms here: ‘public’, as well as ‘democratic’, as well as ‘life’. ‘Public’ might entail the published public sphere – or the general daily communication between people. Democratic might design a system of governance which applies to the entire social sphere – reducing to a minimum what is reserved as a private sphere – or it might, on the contrary, be seen as the mere organisation of a minimum of social activities (notably, public order, security, defence, foreign affairs), leaving most of the social life outside the majority control. And “life” – as linked to cultural production in particular – might be designating the public part of creativity, consumption, and distribution, leaving aside anything which is produced outside this sphere, such as amateur art, private research, handicraft and cookery not intended for a market etc. The most important example of this is probably home music practises: someone has said (the music ethnologist Ingemar Grandin, oral communication) that the music produced and consumed by the public “cultural apparatus” of symphony orchestras, opera houses, rock festivals etc. might constitute 10% of the music life...

\textsuperscript{424} In this moment a EU investigation is going on, on the compatibility of Swedish press subsidies with EU state support regulations.

\textsuperscript{425} Today some excellent handbooks in media economy are available – cf Picard and Doyle.
pioneering study by Walter Lippmann on the press in Chicago of the 1920s, showing that a majority of the households had two or more daily newspapers, and, also, of traditional press structure in Danish provincial towns – where there used to be four different daily newspapers of diverse political colourings. Today there is not one single Labour movement owned daily newspaper in Denmark, and only one or two\(^{426}\) that are not definable as right-wing, Neo-liberal or liberal in their political loyalties.

The same situation prevails in most countries, which used to have a rich diversity of press, also in political terms. In some countries (for example the United Kingdom) the disparition of local press alternatives has been compensated by national press being distributed all over the country, and thereby upholding a minimum of pluralism also at the local level. Still the same dominance of centre-right political tendencies is at hand. In most countries, however, national press is just a rather small part of the total press – local or provincial press dominate the market.

The press situation in the Western world, by and large, as a consequence of the disparition of most left-wing daily newspapers, has involved a turn to the political right of the media spectrum, even taking into account the “internal pluralism” undoubtedly being the case in some of the remaining national or provincial/local, newspapers. In the local press also a tendency of “neutralisation” of the stories presented might be perceived, though there do not exist, to my knowledge, any large and reliable studies of this, obviously difficult for an analytic approach, subject. Evaluation in quantitative terms is difficult, albeit not impossible – by way of citation frequencies, inquiries among journalists and other key opinion groups of readership on their media use etc.

Speaking in terms of the “opinion space”, a number of, economically speaking, less successful titles might play an important political role, in virtue of their prestige among central opinion-forming personalities, such as journalists, the academy, teachers, politicians and business leaders. This well-known illustration of the notion of cultural capital is provided by the French daily Le Monde, the Independent or the Guardian in the United Kingdom etc.

In some respects the situation bears a resemblance to non-democratic countries: pluralism in terms of several independent “ordinary” media channels is reduced or entirely absent, but still a trickle-down effect exists, emanating indirectly from media which are not being directly used by consumers in a region, social group or a market but by “mediators” like journalists or people central in the opinion space. In non-democratic countries foreign sources and personal communication, such as telephone or e-mail or Internet sites may fulfill this mediating role, vigorously promoted by recent technological development.

**An excursus into counter-factual economic history**

The development of the media sector is, by and large, normal for a free-market economy – more liberal conditions of the regulatory regime favour a more rapid process of concentration in “developed” economic sectors. This is ordinary economics textbook knowledge, demonstrated *contra* by historical experience, when interventions like rationing production material, such as paper or other means of production (manpower, machinery, credits) determined market conditions. Shortage of resources may promote a certain level of pluralism in media production, which had not been “normal” in a fully competitive regime. This is just a special case of regulatory interventions allowing production, which would disappear under “normal market pressure”\(^{427}\). One case in media production was the wartime and post-war rationing of paper in Sweden – restricting the space of newspapers for advertisements and thereby fully exercising their competitive power to take over market shares. Once rationing was lifted in the beginning of the 1950s, press concentration accelerated. Rationing is a “fair” – since it is supposed to be applied equitably, according to need - but an “unnatural”, and therefore “inefficient” (in dogmatic market economy

---

\(^{426}\) Information and Politiken

\(^{427}\) Japanese economic development after the Second World War may be cited as a case, and, probably, though it may sound blasphemous, the US economy, also boosted by far-reaching protectionist measures…
terms), way of allocation of resources – although reasons of efficiency are also referred to in crisis situations, such as the current imbalance of financial systems which have lead to massive regulatory interventions and public subventions, for reasons of urgent efficiency.

A counter-factual thought experiment might be to imagine a continued regulation of paper provision to the press – certain to have provoked vivid protests from the industry, and also from journalists. This regulation would be analogous to the regulation of frequency space for broadcasting – which, notably in the United States, is still considered to be a common property of the nation. In Communist dictatorships rationing of paper was upheld for quite opposite reasons than equitable distribution of production resources to independent producers, so this is a case beyond the scope of this thought experiment. After all, the intention behind restrictions in wartime economies of capitalist democratic countries was not, in itself, to restrict competition, but to distribute scarce resources, just as other resources, such as food, equitably, so as to avoid black markets and disorder in supply. A planned economy was considered necessary in all wartime economies in the past century.

Bearing the development of the press in mind, it remains, incidentally, to be proved that the efficiency of the market was significantly raised, in terms of competition and availability of advertising space in the long run, after the lifting of regulations. The huge expansion of advertising space in general, as a consequence of the economic recovery in general and media expansion specifically, does not necessarily mean that the buyers of advertising space obtained better conditions in terms of competition of advertising media. Advertisers seem, actually, to be inevitably doomed to schizophrenia, between the interest of reaching the widest possible audience through one single medium on one hand, and the interest of keeping advertising costs down by having a reasonable competition of advertising media in a market, that is, avoiding monopoly, on the other.

One might dispute the relevance of this recollection of intervention into newspaper markets but it is tempting to adopt the somewhat nostalgic conclusion that the lifting of paper rationing was a mistake, seeing from the point of view of press pluralism, just as it is tempting - to take an analogy from the physical communication (i.e. not the mental) space - to assume that the lifting of restrictions on mineral oil products for private consumption was a mistake. The freedom of those individuals, who could afford it, to provide their own transport, restricted in a rationing regime, might have in the end been greater, if the development and maintenance of less polluting, gradually improved - and probably practically free for all - common transport services would have been possible. This presupposes that restrictions on private motor cars had been upheld, and that (despite increasing short-term consumer pressure!) massive investment in common transport systems had been undertaken instead of in private motor car transports. Certainly, private motor cars gave a degree of freedom to those who could afford them, and in that sense promoted a kind of “pluralism”. But as traffic congestions became the rule in urban conglomerations this advantage rapidly vanished and instead the possession of a private motor car became a necessity instead of a pleasure. And, in the largest urban areas, collective transport is still the most reasonable or even feasible system – if bicycles are not included, as is shown by those cities which were wise enough to reserve public space for this undoubtedly genial transport means for the massive majority of the population!

In the end, the issue whether restrictions – under democratically genuine participation – of this kind would have hampered economic development as a whole is an open question: it is basically a part of what historians call counterfactual history-making. The cost of inflexibility in planning and bureaucratic systems must be balanced against the costs of capital-destruction and inefficiencies in inequitable resource allocations caused by market mechanisms. The “public economy”, in the sense of being an economy controlled by elected or otherwise political administrations, would obviously occupy a greater part of the national (or international) household, in the case of transport, as in the case of the media.

428 like Amsterdam and Copenhagen, but unlike Beijing, London and Paris
Public economy could be handled by private entrepreneurs, adapting to war-time production situations or other situations of planned economy – such as in the case of the United States during World War II (cf. Galbraith 1996). Hitler’s “national socialism” was efficiently cooperating with private enterprise (“Konzerne” like Flick, Krupp, Thyssen, IG Frben, split into Bayer and Hoechst…) as well as developing efficient state production models, for example of car production for the people (VW). In general, Nazi economy was, just as Japanese economy before, in, and after the war, built on close cooperation between the State and private capitalist enterprises. And, memory is short: most welfare states adopted the idea of a “mixed” market economy, where market principles were applied within a framework of public regulations and, sometimes but rarely, public ownership, along with cooperatives and other non-capitalist forms of private enterprise. The production of public services was in many sectors left to private enterprise, although financing is still largely a public affair. Experiments to privatize the production of public services like education, garbage collection etc. has been logic from the end of the Cold War period – actually this period of deregulation might be seen as a parallel to the abolition of war-time rationing practices in the Western world. And, consequently the requirements for long-term reflection when investments are planned and performed, might benefit from recalling mistakes of earlier generations…

Summarizing: concentration of enterprise, of property and consequently of control and power over cultural production is a normal or “natural”429 feature of market mechanisms. Actors in the “mechanism” are ultimately persons of flesh and blood – but mostly they act in accordance with interests and constraints, just as in most other economic sectors. And concentration of control is one such, rather “law-bound”, tendency of markets. On the other hand, experience from war-time and other interventionist periods in diverse regions of the world teaches us that market “mechanisms” are not mechanical, unless one permits them to be so. Neither mind, nor society, is “mechanical” – this is just a misunderstanding of terms, albeit quite popular since the invention of the clockwork, some time around the beginning of the “modern” age.

The other media

The press, despite being still a reference mass medium, has lost much of its dominant position. Television, the most powerful and/or popular mass-medium and central to most election campaigns over the world, follows different “mechanisms” or policies of governance than the print media. Television was mostly initially run as a state controlled service, thus from the outset being exempt to pure market regulations and commercial exploitation. Scarcity of natural resources, viz. frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum, did not make competition possible in most parts of the world. Even in the US, where already in the 1930s decisions were taken to allocate most of the radio spectrum to private companies, rather strict controls were upheld – the decisions to award licences and frequencies being explicitly based on the view that private companies were publicly entrusted actors.

Only when distribution frequencies became less scarce, by way of satellites and cable networks, and the installation of high-performance general data transmission networks, the regulatory policies gave room for competition. Still regulatory frameworks and public intervention is widely practised in most countries, for the attribution of frequencies, legislation on “decency” or other content matters. In Europe, state-owned channels continue to attract a great or even major part of the audience, albeit these channels are organized within a gradually more commercial structure, being financed by advertising, competing for popular entertainment and sports programmes with private channels etc.

The political right-wing parties, from liberals to neo-conservatives (probably also including Tony Blair’s New Labour) but also the political centre, mainly the Social Democratic parties, tend to accept or even promote a shrinking role for these state-owned or public channels. Still the

429 Obviously “natural” in a sense different from the laws of physics or biology… “Laws” in the social sector are a disputed term but probably an inevitable heuristic device for presenting research findings and generalisations.
regulatory framework of the European Union permits broadcasting channels as a public service and exempt from the strict application of restrictions for state support.\textsuperscript{430}

For commercial broadcasting, however, market conditions – including the formation of “Konzerns” tend to approach the other parts of the economy, including the print media. Thus concentration, horizontal and vertical, is taking place, and global networks on all levels of production and distribution, predominantly dependent on large US entertainment and media corporations, follows similar lines as that of the press. But, since the markets look quite different from the press media – first of all by being primarily national, not local or regional (and with the Internet, global) – radio and television is mostly playing in a kind of duopolistic or oligopolistic division. One major private actor, in Europe, normally plays on the same level as the old public broadcasters. In some countries, like Italy and France, these private players are closely related or identical to the political forces in power. This is valid for Bouygues’ TF 1 as well as Lagardère’s and Dassault’s arms industry-linked media groups in France, Berlusconi’s Mediaset in Italy, and perhaps Bertelsmann’s RTL in Germany, and, possibly, also Murdoch’s empire “Sky”, “The Sun” etc. in Britain, though the loyalties have switched from the Conservatives to Blair’s New Labour – conditionally at least.

The affiliations to political dominant groups have, without any doubt, been quite instrumental in shaping legislation and other regulations so as not to obstruct the activities of these groups in terms of expansion, consolidation or concentration.

Trying to foresee a scenario on this background might inspire some pessimism as far as media pluralism is concerned. Though market pressure towards concentration continues to be rather significant, the possibilities and/or willingness of political leaderships to intervene in any significant way to halt the processes seem to decrease or be simply negligible.

Alternatives to this media development are mostly suggested by marginal groups or less media-favoured political currents. The advance of new information technology has not really changed this situation. Theoretical Internet facilities for everyone to express her- or himself to the entire world may to some extent have satisfied public opinion, despite the prevailing market structures and ongoing concentration processes in traditional media sectors. Internet, in spite of its globality and universal availability, even pluralism and tolerance, may thus rather strengthen than weaken the power of established “discourse-formatters”… This situation may from this perspective be used as an illustration to Herbert Marcuse’s well-known thesis from the 1970s on repressive tolerance.

Still, pessimism – such as the next-to contempt expressed by Robert McChesney - could also take us too far – the richness, imprevisibility and anarchic order of the Internet constitute a reality, the effects of which might be quite important in some cases, defying quantitative market conditions, precisely by its penetration of the mediatic walls erected in dominant traditional media markets.

One intermediary field of cultural production is the scientific publication field. Scientific publications, both periodical and monographic, are in the process of adapting to the electronic era, making the cyberspace as much or even more important than the customary printed publications arena. Already tens of thousands of scientific periodicals are published in this way, and the e-book is slowly making its way across diverse obstacles of copyright etc. Structures have been or are being established to adapt the traditions of the scientific community to this new era, and editors are building up positions that preserve their economic impact and control over markets. The control over pricing in this market is crucial, but seems to be upheld, despite great apprehensions on the side of publishers some years ago. It is a rather paradoxical situation, too, from the point of view of market economy, since almost the entire costs of production of the electronic scientific publications are covered by the public sector: laboratories, salaries, peer review time, educational systems are all paid for by the state. The editors are acting as spiders in the web, con-

\textsuperscript{430} The notion of public service is contested by the rejected proposed EU Constitutional Treaty – it was in fact an important matter for the opponents to the text to retain the notion.
trolling flows, building up positions, and being paid by the same states who (by way of research libraries, educational systems etc.) already paid the production resources. In the long run this must inevitably be perceived also in the state budgets allocated to research – less and less, in this open research field, costs money to media corporations. So far this does not affect their pricing policies, on the contrary, prices continue to mushroom for scientific publications… The more subtle reason for this is that the learned society is a web of positions, status, reputation, and, clearly, production results – intertwined with the publication industry.

It is remarkable that, just as in arms production, it is finally the tax-payer who opens her or his purse, but the private industry which reaps the fruits of this investment. It is, furthermore, also a brilliant example of the intimate cooperation between the state and private enterprise – the “Konzerne”, as already indicated. It might be symbolic that, for example in France, the most important media groups are intimately linked to the arms industry (Dassault, Lagardère) – a case of, if you like it, the new “feudalism”. The electronic industry, obviously, has more or less always been linked to military structures – in Sweden Ericsson.
The state, corporations, and civil society: the future of the public sphere

Ownership and control

Discussions of cultural policy in general, and media policies in particular – focussing on relations of power, influence and control of markets, supply and perhaps also demand – categories of actors are traditionally divided into the public sphere, the private sphere and the intermediate sphere of “civil society”, the latter being a concept very much in fashion during the last decades – but in the modern age mostly referred to as being launched by Gramsci. Some scholars claim however that this concept is much older, even to be traced back to Aristotle and in later times further developed by Hegel – but rejected by Marx. Issues of control over cultural production are usually tightly linked to this trinity of categories of social actors; debates focussing on the balance and borderlines to be drawn between these spheres. Ideological classifications in Western political contexts are customarily also being made on this ground, albeit rather differently in diverse historical periods (Hegel, for example, being ordinarily classified as a “conservative” but still being very much in favour of a central state power).

Some aspects of control might be taken as issues of ownership: public, private or “civil” ownership (such as controlled by organisations, non-profit bodies, foundations, etc.) Other aspects are not liable to be classified in those terms – control, influence and power being rather volatile concepts, tied to social networks and political or just human relations. In the sphere of cultural production – specifically media production and distribution – the above-mentioned “Green Paper” of the European Commission from 1992 proposed a regulation of media ownership. The document proposed a rather elaborated categorisation of diverse forms of control, including formal ownership (total or partial), financial by way of credits, supplying materials for production, over to social control relations or power – including family and love relations.

The green paper problematised ownership as being the only kind of control over production in the cultural sphere – it might be understood as an (probably an unconscious) application of Bourdieu’s work to demonstrate the complexity of relations in the field of cultural control and “distinction”.

For a political measure designed to control cultural production effectively, a basic consciousness of the complexity and variety of forms of control is a prerequisite. A successful businessman knows that ownership as such is subject to a wealth of manipulations in contemporary economic life – and that power relations and control over decisions and markets are susceptible to manipulations and mock operations. In a broader social context, integrating both economic and other forms of social life, formal relations of control might, likewise, be embedded in complex informal webs of control. The terms cultural and social capital serve as key concepts to account for these webs – but also risk to associate control to the possession of some kind of asset (capital). The mere possession of cultural/social capital does not uniquely determine the actual use of it – capital might be passive or active. This is amply demonstrated by the different uses which holders of capital make in the media sector – from passivity as far as political influence is concerned (Bertelsmann) to very interventionist actions (Murdoch).

Concrete and systematic examples of mapping cultural power relations, based on correspondence analysis, have been presented by Bourdieu in several of his works, and other examples have been given in national or local contexts. The measurement of this kind of capital is more

---

431 Lecture by Jacques Capdevielle at the Attac Summer university at Poitiers August 2005.
432 Barbro Andersson (2005) contains a mapping of the Swedish artist environment, based on parameters like personal relations, education career, scholarship criteria and selections, critiques in leading newspapers etc.
Media policy and cultural policy, state and democracy

One basic tenet of what is commonly referred to as cultural policy, or (sometimes including, sometimes not) media policy, is the role of the political sphere in these fields. Actually the definition of cultural policy is mostly about which role public authorities should play in the field of the arts, the media, and - historically the primary sector of cultural policies - the cultural heritage, monuments, sites and ancient objects. Whatever role the “civil society” is given in this context, the principal divide goes between state (public) and non-state spheres. “Policy” thus refers to public policies. “State” means in this context also local government and regional authorities which have in many states been given a central role in the cultural field (including sometimes also education).

Media policy is mostly only partially included in cultural policy – due to its central role in the constitutional set-up of most states today, which precludes its entire absorption into what is commonly known as cultural policy. Only lately have the media become so central to cultural production in its more narrow sense that the separation of “mediated” art from “living” art has become obsolete.

Cultural and media policies are not the privileges of democratic government – on the contrary: totalitarian or authoritarian regimes were pioneers in launching policies aimed at controlling expressions in various forms. One of the first ministers for cultural affairs in the world was Zhdanov in the Soviet government from 1926.

---

433 Culture has, as is known, a wide range of significations, different from or including “media”
434 In an incomplete survey undertaken for Unesco’s National Commission meeting in Stockholm 2002, 5 years after the Inter-governmental conference of Ministers responsible for cultural affairs in Stockholm, it was rather evident that most countries refer by the term “cultural policy” to the arts, the cultural heritage and sometimes the media.
435 According to Gramsci force is the fundamental mode of action of the state, whereas in civil society (including the economic private sphere) actant is the mode of action presupposed.
436 He was responsible for forcing cultural production to follow Stalin’s guidelines.
Part III - Rounding up for the future – questions.

THE INTERFACE OF STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Finally, we are getting closer to the basic question on the relations between cultural production structure and its “content”.

They might be formulated as follows:

**Does the structure of cultural production in a significant manner determine its content?**

Or, coined in slightly Marxian terms:

**Is cultural production essentially dependent on “material production”?**

These questions are, obviously, not very clear-cut: just contemplate the reservations implied in the terms “significant” or “essentially”. It is finally, as in most scholarly contexts, a matter of demonstrating correlations between two parameters, in more or less quantifiable ways. **How much** does one parameter influence another? And in what way? It is still more difficult to answer the question in a general way, catering for the production structures (and distribution patterns) of newspapers with theatre production and television, not to speak of legal norms, education, religion and scholarly research, to include some of the fields susceptible of inclusion in a wide cultural sector.

But still: it would be absurd to state the opposite, as well. Who could deny that for example printing facilities, budget size, and the intentions of company owners, determine the output of the production as to its content? A commercial theatre produces quite different plays than a state-subsidised opera house, a general television station could not transmit only “profound” programmes, at the risk of losing audience. The resource set-up of cultural production units does of course significantly influence the content of the products. Thus specifications are indispensable to get some sense into the question – which, nevertheless, remains the central issue in media policies.

One first specification is to concentrate on one kind of relationship of dependence between content and structure. The foregoing considerations should have made it rather clear that this study aims at concentrating on power relations – notably political power relations.

In order to proceed, questions have to be asked: does commercial television – which its dependence on publicity – meet needs of citizens of critical and many-sided information on current affairs and social contexts, required for the exercise of democratic participation? Does the continued concentration of ownership of traditional mass media such as daily press influence, if at all, political processes? In what way are election results tied to media activities?

Such general questions could only be answered, or at least approached, after empirical, rather cumbersome investigations – although the presupposition of generalisations might be taken more or less for granted: a proprietor of a business, in cultural production as well as material, must be expected to cater for his own interests. Thus it is not on beforehand reasonable to
think that these interests are not taken into account also in the guidelines or general visions which
the owner of media enterprises has.

So, *a priori*, if the number of business actors in a field is reduced, as is the case in the daily
newspaper sector in a number of countries in the Western world, it is just logical to assume that
the range of proprietors’ interests, in terms, for example, of political aims, is reduced more or less
in proportion....

But then we are back in the kind of problem situations already discussed: how could these
proprietors’ interests be described? As concrete positions in party political terms, or rather more
vaguely as “discourse formulation privileges”, or ideological dominance? Or, as business interests,
not identifiable in detail to political interests, albeit traditionally affiliated to rightwing or liberal
political camps?

The conventional method to study shifts of opinions is questionnaires or interviews with a
statistically secured sample of respondents. These methods, as described above, are naturally de-
pendent on the questions asked, the presuppositions behind these questions – the context or
discourse surrounding them. Some attempts have been made to inquire into the correspon-
dence of political sympathies of a shrinking group of proprietors and the diversity of political
points of view or attitudes catered for in the media sphere. By and large, however, overall pic-
tures provided in the media sphere of these correspondences should be expected to be
controversial, that is, very unlikely to meet with general approval.

**Market, state and the possibility of pluralism.**

**Apories and realities**

Having proceeded so far, let us turn to, first, the more grandiose perspectives of the conditions
of cultural production in terms of power, and, second, specifically some selected problems of
pluralism of content as related to structural changes.

In general terms, the victory of capitalist market economy, liberalisation of trade and de-
regulation of public or other monopolies, of capital flows and other economic basics all over the
world is undeniable – although it could far from be taken for granted that these principles imply a
victory of democratic government all over the world, neither that human happiness has reached
all of mankind. The most striking example today is the mushrooming economy of China, where
capitalism and liberalisation of economic conditions are neither accompanied by liberalisation of
governance, nor by respect for human rights, the environment and social equality.

In political theory, liberal doctrines (Mill, Bentham etc.) tend to link economic freedoms
(freedom of trade, establishment of enterprise etc.) to political freedoms – but the problems
studied in this essay call for, by and large, a rejection of the necessity of this link. The principles
of free and unhampered competition, and of open markets, lead to, on the contrary, in some
fields of production, among those cultural production, consequences which have long been ac-
knowledged but sometimes also neglected. These consequences also tend suffocate liberty of
economic life, by leading to monopoly or oligopoly, and so eliminating the principles of free
choice of the consumer, and therefore to question the viability of economic liberalism in some
crucial markets of cultural production. Free trade, deregulation and open markets might – despite
their seemingly intimate relation with freedom of expression and creation – turn out to be their enemies.

This does not only apply to the media, where thus unbridled competition may jeopardize the basis of liberal democracy, in reducing the expression of diversity of public opinions in the available media outlets. To many other forms of cultural production, notably in the traditional fields of “cultural policies” – that is, the (fine) arts and the cultural heritage this is actually the regular situation, manifested by the necessity of selecting a few products of art or monumental sites and awarding them a specific status, for various reasons (educational, “artistic quality”, tradition in general, national or cultural identity). This implies that entire sectors of cultural production are on beforehand judged to be to valuable to be submitted to market rules.

Also, going to wider concepts of cultural production, such as including the production of legal norms, it is evident that this in most societies is based on quite different principles than market mechanisms – notably moral or cultural values, or inherited historical systems of jurisdiction. This also goes for Cassirer’s central cultural areas, such as religion/myth and language.

On the other hand, the major part of cultural production remains firmly integrated in market mechanisms, viz. the cultural industries, “popular art”, and the media. Only in a select sector of the latter field the clash between media enterprise and freedom of opinion is – by some – regarded as a problem. In the field of popular culture or popular art, it is seldom held that market mechanisms constitute a democratic problem, although quite severe criticism is launched against market dominance and standardisation of tastes in the cultural industries, at least since Adorno-Horkheimer’s violent attacks in the 1940s.

Actually, the controversy on media pluralism is caused by the transition of regulated war and post-war cultural production with a wide-spread pluralism of newspaper firms to free competition - which has eliminated most competition in this sector to the advantage of “monopolistic competition” or sheer monopolies. The deregulation of war-time planned economies, abolition of rationing and lifting restrictions to trade etc., was grounded in a growing confidence in a relatively unhampered global peaceful development.

While competition in media and other cultural production structures is usually held in high esteem, as a ground pillar of liberal economic and political theory, the same competition – in some countries very quickly – has led to the elimination of competition itself, to monopolistic production. The primary factor of monopolisation has been easy to identify: low marginal costs of production. In the model example of the newspaper sector, in many Western countries, in some decades a pluralism of diverse media representing diverse political outlooks was replaced by a rather monolithic structure of local monopoly: one daily newspaper in each local community. Some nation-wide distribution of the press continues, in some countries, but mostly the basic local, competition level just disappeared, resulting in the elimination of, in most cases, newspapers anchored in the left-wing part of the political spectrum.

In general terms – for advanced market economies liberal trade practices seem simply incompatible with sustained pluralism in media ownership. Moreover – if our general assumptions about links between structure and content are basically sound – market economy and unrestricted competition is a threat to competition itself, both in terms of diversity of enterprise and of opinions expressed in the media.

This is – as obstinately repeated in our foot-notes – just what is to be expected, according to traditions of liberal economic insights, from Adam Smith and onwards.

Nevertheless, this old wisdom seems to have been forgotten, probably due to the delicate interplay between cultural production, political democracy and economic principles of non-intervention into a free market. We are facing what may be, after Kant, labelled a “political aporia”, a deadlock of liberal market theory, as a theory accounting for all different sectors of production.

439 Though, again, not unreservedly subscribed to by Adam Smith...
In other fields of cultural production, as we have seen, this aporia does not arise, simply because market mechanisms remain unchallenged in contemporary societies. This goes for popular culture, trade in the field of “experience economy” (tourism, gastronomy), but also on the other side of the spectrum, where the issue of complete liberalisation never really came to the fore, such as the fine arts or the cultural heritage. These are by tradition just marginally attached to market mechanisms, being mostly financed by some sponsor, ecclesiastical, royal or merchant. The same goes for research (distinctly from development or technology) as well as large parts of education – although the scene is shifting at present, leaving private initiatives, business interests and trade in services more room than before.

Since pluralism in the opinion space is grounded in the media sphere, the apories are significant, however, since both in the print media sector and broadcasting pluralism of opinion by independent actors is difficult to uphold in a structure of unregulated competition and free trade, though sometimes compensatory developments, due to internal pluralism, or development of new forms or techniques of distribution and production, mitigate this process.

In the print media sector this is first and foremost due to structural concentration of markets and ownership of companies mostly deriving from competition in publicity. The audiovisual sector is also dependent on publicity, although in Europe a rather strong sector of state or public media companies compete, though also most of these also derive parts of their budget from this source of income. Indirectly, the impact of publicity is even stronger, because of the extremely rising level of cost for broadcasters of the most popular programme material, such as major events in sports. Public broadcasters have difficulties in following this rise in cost level, and, since competition for a maximal audience for entertainment programmes leads to a uniformisation of programme supply in commercial television and radio, also public broadcasters have to follow broad audience tastes, in order not to lose their “constituencies” both in political assemblies (which decide on licence fee rates etc.) and public opinion at large. These broadcasters are also rather vulnerable to criticisms for elite or snob programming and so could not focus too much on “narrow” programme tables, although the main refuge for other programmes than broad entertainment is public broadcasting, and some niche channels. Still, talking about the space for diversity of political and ideological controversy, public broadcasters tend to be radically more diverse in their programme supplies than commercial broadcasters.

In many circles, predominantly liberal in their general political outlook, the appearance of “free” commercial private radio and television channels was regarded as a breakthrough for a new media diversity, overcoming the state prerogative in radio and television. Most observers would, at least in the Western part of Europe, however, rather register their disappointment with developments so far – from the point of view of the contribution of commercial broadcasting to political pluralism in the media. The reasons have just been mentioned: commercial constraints clash with a requirement to supply material which is not suitable as an environment for paid advertising. The attempts to produce independent radio and television on a community basis have not really either meant a breakthrough in this respect: rarely, if ever, community broadcasters present an alternative to dominant press opinions, or national TV newscasts, in terms of audience shares.

In Eastern Europe the situation might look a bit different: In Moscow, for example, the radio station Echo Moskvy has long been judged as one of the very rare media outlets which dares to go against hardening government pressures. Similar cases have been encountered in other ex-communist countries in Europe.

In the print media the role of the public sector is much smaller – the private business sector traditionally catering for pluralism, though this role is gradually, as described, becoming more symbolic than real. The difference between those two spheres in this respect remains somewhat

---

440 The decision to abolish publicity income for the French public broadcasting channels will turn market relations upside down in this country, leaving the field open for private commercial television for this lucrative market – albeit perhaps promoting its independence...
puzzling, even taking into account the different production conditions. The role of the private market has been regarded as an essential prerequisite for an open and democratic exchange of views and the formation of public opinion as a whole. A state monopoly, or strict control, over the press has not in general been compatible with democratic governance. Still, the development of monopolisation and concentration of ownership/control, also, as repeatedly stated, constitutes a serious threat to the very essence of a liberal political structure, where a multitude of mutually independent news and opinion sources is fundamental to a pluralistic debate, and political controversy, emanating in different alternative choices at general elections.

In the arts, on the other hand, public institutions have a crucial role in some fields, such as theatre, opera, symphony music, and museums, while the private sector, or the market, is mostly judged to work satisfactorily in, for example, the book industry, and most popular culture industries.

Internet

Internet is a slightly different case – although growing very quickly as a primary source of both information itself and of finding information sources elsewhere, it does not yet replace the older media in terms of reaching a wide audience, that is, changing market conditions. Potentially and, in some situations, it is, however, a crucial source of information and of communication, for example in social movements like the “altermondialiste” Attac movement, or the Mexican Zapatistas, to mention some cases, and, last but not least, the US presidential campaign in 2008.

Computers have rapidly become a tool for everyday information and communication in all parts of the world – albeit globally still a privilege (like the telephone) for a select few – and are likely to play a central role in the future media landscape and the entire cultural production. Internet has, naturally, a potential of being an indestructible instrument of pluralism in political and cultural life, at least as a security valve for opinions completely marginalized. Still it is also vulnerable to censorship and abuse of power. The concessions made by Internet operators to the Chinese government, the army of Chinese controllers of Internet sites, as well as the closure of many Iranian operators hosting critical weblogs, are too well known to be ignored. Still, the power of governments to control the Web is limited, and mostly confined to their own language areas. In the future, however, the nature of information technology development might, or might not, open for new facilities of regulating and steering access to Internet sources by governments. As in the case of virus construction and attacks this is a question of being “first out” with new technology.

Hitherto, Internet seems to, by its very construction, to have resisted a number of regulatory or censoring interventions from governments, but the issue remains open. Precisely because of this, cultural production facilities, and notably their role for sustaining or creating political pluralism, call for certain conservatism. This conservatism (employing the ecological use of the term conservation) suggests a “risk management” approach in order to keep as many roads open as possible, as diverse means of expression, distribution of material, and communication with various groups in society. Thus, neither deregulation, mediatic anarchy nor excessive public interventionism recommend themselves as the attitude to adopt in policy-making.

But still, as a general rule, and, as analysed by C. Edwin Baker (2007), the hopes that new media outlets should replace disappearing newspapers of various political colourings in the democratic debate, thus restoring a new kind of pluralism in media markets, have not come true, speaking in terms of the “real market”.

CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND POWER: THE WAY AHEAD

Throughout this study the amalgamation of the study of media structures into a wider field of cultural production has been suggested. Media studies have – in conformity with this view - in much recent research been integrated into a wider field of cultural or communication studies.
Whichever of the possible 164 (Kluckhohn and Kroeber) definitions of culture you might prefer – there are few areas of culture which might not be regarded as communicative in an essential sense, or even related to the media. A sketch of this situation has been given above. The one major possible exception might be the material cultural heritage. Although monuments and sites, archaeological remainders etc. had, in their time communicative aspects, such as “representing” the splendour of secular and religious rulers, certainly also to forthcoming generations, the cultural heritage is rather a question of injecting into history the intentions of “our time” – imposing on historical events and monuments meanings which are included in our horizons and contexts.

Texts preserved from earlier generations are of course a communicative cultural heritage par excellence just as the orders, forms and presuppositions existing “under” or “in” these texts, viz. “discourses” in Foucault’s sense. The archaeology, disclosure or revelation of these discourses by research, also demonstrates communicative orders, systems of significations, meanings – hidden and open. But still, a distinction should be made between the explicit communicative intentions of different generations, including a possible intention to “leave a trace to future generations”, and the more occasional remnants of buildings, objects etc. of an everyday character, which allow later generations to trace the cultures and lives of passed generations. The presentation and use of cultural heritage is much enhanced by the media – one brilliant example is the “visual visit” of the prehistoric Chauvet grotto in France with its 31 000 years old paintings.

The integration of communication research with cultural studies in recent years brings to bear some questions which have, as suggested in the introduction pointing to the discussion on the “dilemma of cultural studies”, also political implications.

Some differences between the various sub-domains of study covered by the labels of media studies, communication research and cultural studies, may be noted, perhaps mostly referring to empirical data differences. This is by no means a plea for re-introducing a disciplinary order separating the fields of study which have been labelled ethnography, sociology, ethnology, anthropology… over to semiotics, discourse analysis etc. from cultural studies, media studies or communication studies.

In media studies commercial interest has given rise to important production of statistics – for example of audiences, of press circulation figures etc. The interest of media companies, such as newspapers, television and radio, to supply to advertisers as exact data as possible for their marketing has brought about empirical data of quite detailed nature in the more developed economies of the capitalist world – that is, today practically all major economies of the world. Some of these data are produced by media themselves, or their associations, some by marketing companies, advertising associations etc. This approach, once labelled “administrative research” is associated to media economy studies taught at business schools, an aspect more developed in later periods, while earlier media studies focussed more on journalistic professional practices and training, as well as reception studies, political aspects of media and society etc.

Communication studies in a broader sense, treating also other aspects than the mass media in a narrow sense, take into account also oral (direct) communication, conversation, as well as media like film etc. Today cyberspace is of course a primary field of study. Socio-linguistics, psychology, ethnology, psycho-linguistics are adjacent studies. In those fields too, much effort is devoted to reception studies, data on media use other than for commercial purposes, etc. Statistics is being developed by both research institutions and institutions of statistical surveys, whether national, European and international. Other data are also assembled, such as opinion and attitude research data, communication habits etc. This is done by universities, research institutions and public authorities etc.

In cultural studies many data of a similar kind are assembled, but important data are also gathered as to cultural habits in general, outside mediated culture – that is, museum visits, theatre statistics, sales and trade in the arts, amateur activities etc. The backbone of this approach is a
mixture of sociology, anthropology, semiotics, discourse analysis – it is actually developing into a discipline of its own.

Some studies are explicitly undertaken for the purpose of elaborating public cultural policies, where there is a specific interest in some labour market and educational statistics such as dealing with the number and proportion of diverse artistic professions, enrolment in arts schools. This latter kind of studies has lately been developed around centres of data collection and analysis in a number of countries, “observatories” of cultural policy relevant research. Unesco keeps a web portal so as to link these observatories where at present quite substantial work is undertaken to establish internationally compatible and available material for use by decision-makers and scholars. The most advanced effort is probably made by the consortium of interests gathered around the World Culture reports conducted by Helmut Anheier441 and his international team of scholars and institutions, as a follow-up of Unesco’s World Culture Reports, produced in the sequel of the World Commission for Culture.442

One other more recent collective international effort is the institute working in association with the EU, the “Laboratory”.

All these efforts – dealing with what is traditionally perceived as “culture” in some relatively generous conception - include as a major part attention to the media. Studies of cultural structures – and communication habits/discourses – are often by necessity “qualitative”, that is, descriptive in broader terms than captured in statistical tables. This by no means makes them less “scientific”, after all the classical type of study on media was historical – and history has in most contexts still a character of a descriptive research effort443.

The seclusion of media research to mass media in a traditional sense has, as a consequence of this development, become out-dated – as stated by the school of cultural studies. Another, reverse, way of formulating the same standpoint might be to say that the idea of excluding media from social or cultural studies of any kind in contemporary society is as pointless as excluding the sea from the study of navigation. Or: Media are simply the water of cultural vessels in the contemporary world.

Mappings of processes and events

Scholarly effort in social and cultural science is more easy to pursue on a static level than developments and events over a longer period of time. In the context of studying changes in structural relations to content production – for example from the point of view of pluralism in the opinion space – this is a major difficulty dependent on the rather restricted availability of media and cultural production structure statistics as time-series. The investment necessary for following, for example, corporate mergers, acquisitions and other structural changes is considerable - this is a major point of interest to research on media structure. Available data-bases and public statistics have also mostly to be supplemented by more “literary” sources like biographies as well as celebration publications on individual firms and family companies444.

Data-bases, independent or gradually being established in the context of cultural and media “observatories” around the world, are likely to eventually become more continuous so as to allow for time series.

Cultural institutions are often subject to historical study, describing their development, including quantitative material (the number of actors in Theatre X, the budget size or staff of newspaper Y at time Z etc.) As in most cases of historical work, a pretension or side-intention exists, to teach us something about likely events or trends to follow, despite all clichés about his-

441 The first report was published in April 2007, a second has followed in October 2008.
443 Cf Ricoeur 1986 and von Wright on explanation and description in scholarly work.
444 The classic example of a rather continuous series of inquiries in media structure is of course Ben Bagdikian’s “The Media Monopoly” in its subsequent editions. On the Swedish arena the dominant Bonnier media family has been the object of numerous both biographic and scholarly publications – cf. Sundin. Similar accounts are found in most other contexts in other countries. A bibliographic international data-base would actually be a natural constituent of an international network of media observatories.
tory never repeating itself. Just like ordinary scholarly work these historical accounts involve a predictive ambition, suggesting aspects to be applied in future work of the sector. Similarly, therefore, ambitions to predict media production and cultural production as a whole will also refer to historical accounts. An ambition to build up systematic risk management policies, as outlined above, for the safeguarding of diversity/pluralism in the cultural production/media sector will thus include historical aspects, whether on strategic changes in markets, companies, consumption patterns, political affiliations or more subtle evolutions in terms of discourse hegemony etc.

The latter is also a point where political controversy clearly enters the field: the association to historical models predetermines the analysis of present developments, as well as the prediction of coming events.

**Concentration history**
The crucial change in the field of cultural production examined in this study is the phenomenon of *concentration*, of enterprise, control, ownership, market shares, production units like editorial units or relating to some other parameters.

Measures of concentration in terms of *economic* capital are frequent in business life in general, such as, in the daily newspaper market, the market share held by the 3, 4 or 8 biggest operators or groups. For example, the number of operators in the US daily newspaper market has, in terms of dominant groups, drastically diminished – according to the, regularly updated, classic study by Ben Bagdikian, and other studies by McChesney, Herman and Herbert Schiller.

Concentration of *social or cultural* capital (influence) is more difficult to assess, as already discussed – but commonly assumed to, at least in some degree, accompany or be comparable to concentration of economic capital.

This kind of assessment is – essentially - analogous to discourse analysis in a historical study (with Foucault as the pioneer), and it is easier to pursue in a “closed” space of the past, a historical period. The task for a contemporary analysis is to formulate a generalisation for an opinion space, trying to single out, describe, and document the dominant ways of thinking. Less scholarly analyses of this kind are presented in the daily practice of most media commentators, trying to grasp trends, as well as in colloquial contexts such as daily dinner conversations, in cafes or in the bar. The banality of these kinds of generalisations may always impress, and yet they aspire to communicate a view of a broad social context – give a background to conversation. The border-line between “small talk” discourse and colloquial framework (“life-world”, in philosophical terms) for scientific discourse is not always easy to draw.

In order to transform into scholarly practice such colloquial generalisations customary methods are the establishment of bibliographies, on a basis of normal classification of content, of quality etc., references based on relevance and scientific skills etc.

Descriptions of social developments are seldom uncontested. The image of contemporary (Western) society given in, for example, Manuel Castells’s work on the Information Society, applies diverse perspectives - political, economic, cultural etc. Though these perspectives pretend, just as Foucault’s discourse analyses of historical epochs, to give a *true*, or at least a *better* image of a social and historical situation. This pretension does not exclude other, competing, images – applying for example ecological, technological, aesthetical, religious, or other perspectives, which play a minor role in Castells’s opus.

The comparison between an economic concentration perspective with a perspective focussing the “discursive” concentration, or “hegemonic” mentality structure might even be a translation of the more commonplace question as to the relation between structure and content in cultural production – albeit on a very general level. Such a comparison might be footed on concrete analyses of texts, applying diverse techniques of bringing out presuppositions and attitudes not manifestly (to paraphrase, and dispose of, Berelson’s dictum on content analysis!) or

---

445 Cf. Alharran-Mierzwowska on measures of media concentration. The forthcoming report (September 2009) to the EU Commission will concentrate on the issue of indicators of concentration.
overtly present in the available material. Text analysis of this kind is the everyday business of literary critique or research – or, for that matter, traditional exegetics, where the “lead science” is theology.

Cultural production, media and power

The cluster of problems linked to the issue of power over cultural production is – as I hope to have amply documented – a matter of both philosophical and empirical, as well as political, reflection. A cluster, in a musical sense, means that sounds are integrated or interwoven, tones are not distinguished in intervals, but just present a kind of amalgamated noise, a kind of extreme dissonance. The metaphor might be suitable, since problems are tightly, though indistinctly, overlapping, and methods of inquiry taken from empirical social science, political philosophy, and a multitude of other areas, or simply from more general politico-cultural discourse.

The inquiry into cultural production, being a matter of methodological dispute, at least since Marx’s attempt to suggest a neat distinction between material and cultural production situated technology, knowledge of technical, chemical, physical facts, essential for development of new production methods in a shady limbo or purgatory. Recent information technology supplies the most striking example of a kind of knowledge production (that is cultural production) which completely transforms all kinds of material production, from agriculture to textile or arms manufacturing. This is a most striking argument against “materialism” in traditional understandings.

Still, ordering the spectrum of cultural vs. material production along a more or less continuous series, a different perspective might be applied: both the ends of this series might be rather clearly discernible and categorizable, although a clear-cut demarcation criterion between material and cultural production could not be found, and although an “Aristotelian” ontology of everything being both material and “formal” is not applied. And, if there should be any sense in the question of the one being dependent (or related in some other meaning) on the other, some kind of diversity or difference between the two spheres must be accepted. This is a question which has remained in the philosophical and scholarly debate since Marx-Engels, who launched the notions of “base” and “superstructure” (Überbau).

Actually similar considerations are rooted in antiquity, e.g. in Aristotle’s metaphysical dichotomy between form and matter, υλή hyle and μορφή morphē, but also in Plato’s separation of appearance and “idea”. It is a question of the minimal level of the number of distinctions required for the description of “substances”, or any kind of object – that is, the binary level. Trivially, you have to use at least two categories to make distinctions, to make a difference presupposes that you have one level of basis and one differentiating criterion.446

The dichotomy culture/nature serves, on the level of scholarly research as well as colloquial discourse, more or less the same purpose: mountains on the moon, or stardust, are “only nature”, and a sculpture is “primarily” culture – but what about cows, agricultural land etc.? The surface of this planet might be regarded, in view of all its transformations by humans on its surface, as an artefact in its totality, that is, a cultural object.447

Returning into the dichotomy structure/content, it is clear that also culture, just as nature, has structure. One generalises about elements and relations in culture, just as in nature. In the customary sense – that is, in the non-spatial (literal) sense – nature is however rarely said to possess “content”. Upholding the distinction between content and structure, as discussed at length

446 In linguistics, subject and predicate, “topic” and “comment” are similar basic categories. Cf. Dahl 1969. In logic, predicates and individual variables are a parallel.

447 Its inner part perhaps not – humans have not been able to transform the inner part of the earth yet, at least not below a level of 10 km or so….
above, for cultural objects, the point is to inquire into the interdependence between the two levels, not to deny that culture (content) also has a structure, rather to establish some kind of mapping between two structures, one more “material”, the other “ideal” or immaterial. The attempts to establish a consistent use of terms are doomed to fail and the necessity to repeat qualifications thus somewhat cumbersome. In concrete terms: what does the ownership or management conditions of a theatre institution, art gallery, television station or newspaper mean for the content presented in the products of the institution itself?

Content is, thus, by definition something “internal” – albeit content also has a structure, described for example in literary or semiotic analysis. The relation between structure and content (Basis and Überbau) is often referred to as one of being “determined” by the other (“master” and “slave” in the somewhat more romantic Hegelian language). This relation might be expressed in terms of functional dependence – in some mathematical or quasi-mathematical form, either in terms of likelihood (in order to avoid the stricter notion of probability) or some more rigid kind of dependence, approaching a universal dependence (“for all institutions yy of cultural production the products will necessarily be of nature xx…”).

Relations between content and structure are inevitably tied to the human faculty of intervening and creating freely in the communication process – and, consequently, to the unpredictability of human discourse in the individual cases. It is a case of cultural dependence, not a “natural law”. Although human freedom (free will) has been denied many times by philosophers, the inclusion of human freedom of choice, that is the “lawlessness” of talk in accounts of human behaviour and language is inevitable as a condition for making sense of any description of culture, society. Or, in other words: that human action (intention, volition) is a factor of causation. The last point is most clearly perceived in the universal discourse of law and punishment: nobody is to be punished if he/she is not doomed responsible, that is, that her or his will is a cause of the event.

From a social scholarly point of vies, we seem to be faced with a dilemma here:
1. on one hand it is undeniable that cultural production expresses views and represents power positions held by dominant groups in society.
2. on the other hand the individual expressions of views, and therefore also representations of power relations, are not predictable in their precise form, although a probability of basic standpoints is foreseeable.

The issue of dependence of content of cultural products on the structure of the production seems, on a theoretical-logical level, to be located between the two legs of the dilemma. As in many social contexts the truth of the matter is tied to the perspective adopted: between, on one hand, a general social (even statistical) one, where predictability is quite normal, and another individual (intentional), where predictability is restricted or even, as a matter of principle, not possible to uphold.

It is the former – social, general or political - perspective, which is at issue in the debate on cultural production and power structures, whether expressed in ancient Marxian terms of base and superstructure, in Gramscian terms of hegemony, in Foucauldian on dominant discourses, Bourdieu-maps on social capital relations, or in some other analogous current model of thought, such as the one indicated by the notion of “space of opinion”. The other, individualistic, perspective is not invalid, but it is another kind of inquiry. Even capital punishment and torture does not prevent people from expressing their views, but this is another issue.

The next problem is – after having opted for the social-collective perspective of inquiry – to select one of (at least) two competing perspectives on the relationship between the content of cultural production and power structures – I propose to term them the “idealist” and the “economistic” perspectives, respectively.

---

448 Cf. for example Chomsky on the essential features of human language in Cartesian linguistics.
The idealist perspectives

The general “idealistic” view on the interplay between power structures and content of cultural production applied in this study has implied a recognition of other driving forces than economic as motors in social development. Since several uses of this qualification might be applied, a plural form of the term ‘idealist perspective’ is better than the singular. This has a consequence also for the view on the relationship between controllers of cultural production structure and its content. In a structural perspective the primary point of owning or otherwise controlling, cultural production facilities would be the interest to express certain views, political, ideological, religious or philosophical. No doubt a lot of editors of newspapers, of books etc. might easily be ascribed this kind of perspective for their activities. This is actually one way of applying, albeit in another sense, the term “idealistic”, distinguishing the interest of power in a general sense from the profit-motive for cultural production. This sense of ‘idealism’ might be disputable – although the profit-motive becomes secondary, the rather hard-core power motive remains in focus. A much “softer” use of ‘idealist’ might be the one taken for granted in nearly all artistic production, where power motives are rare, albeit the expression of views might not be rare. In these fields of cultural production rather the free expression of creative ideas, political or other, come into focus. The individual-oriented perspective is thus much closer at hand.

The economistic perspective

The opposite perspective, applied both by “neutral observers”, fervent adherents of capitalist market economy principles, as well as critics of power concentration in cultural production focuses on the profit-motive and other “materialistic” aspects, as the primary or exclusive driving-forces in social life, including cultural production. This kind of perspective is more often applied for media production than artistic production, but not uncommon for popular art, or the “creative industries” (cultural industries).

“Neutral observers”, for example within the economic research and counselling professions, take this perspective for granted, although not necessarily rejecting the idea that other motives might be relevant for investments in cultural production.

Critical views – for example Marx-inspired – tend to reject all but egoistic or interest-related motives in cultural production. The base-superstructure theory is one way of expressing this view – and “idealistic” motives or explanations are often dismissed as “ideology” or false ideology.

But also adherents of market-inspired “deregulation” or “system-change” “Neo-liberal” views tend to adopt the same economistic positions – where the motives of economic self-interest, competition and capital accumulation in private hands are ascribed dominant roles, from a completely positive standpoint. The critical element in this position amounts to an impatience with “immobility” and objections to safeguards of a welfare society administered by a public sector.

This kind of double critique lies behind much of criticism of conventional cultural policies accounted for above – coming both from a “liberalistic” camp (using “populist” arguments) and from a radical left-wing camp, such as Adorno-Horkheimer and later criticism of cultural industries, but also from popular-culture-based left-wing criticism in the Cultural studies movement (Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and others). Both currents dismiss “popular educational” motives for cultural policies as élitism.

On the other hand, also the opposite kind of criticism, focussing on the aspects of monopolisation could find arguments in liberalistic or Neo-liberal (really “Manchester-liberal”, that is, very old liberal laissez-faire…) creeds: the basis of social development is to be found in freedom of competition and absence of interference or regulations of other kinds of power centres than the consumer, viz. as exercised by guilds, cartels, trade privileges etc. This economic free-

---

449 A classic is Habermas’s Erkenntnis und Interesse, discussed later by authors like Apel and Ricoeur.
dom is a basis for pluralism and freedom of choice. Since unbridled market economy is not, and has never been, the case, and even the most ardent believer in market economy nowadays defends regulations, at least as “frameworks” for preventing competition to destroy itself, the primary attacks being directed against remaining, mostly public, monopolies.

In actual controversies, however, the liberal economistic position, though theoretically critical of monopolisation, mostly ends up in a defence of the right of companies to merge and extend their markets, strengthening their positions up to the verge of market dominance.

Mostly this position is however linked to an “idealistic” view on the dependence between structure and content. That is, the creed in the importance of economic self-interest and the ultimate dominance of this motive in social action, is associated to a defence of the unpredictability and objectivity of the content of cultural products, whatever the economic realities may be. Mostly this position is an “anti-determinist” position whereby the merits of “inner” pluralism are advanced. Concretely: the ownership or structural dependence of one or other media outlet or cultural production unit does not in any essential way predetermine the content, neither to its form nor to its, most importantly, political or ideological content.

The consistency of this attitude seems doubtful, or at least a matter of degree, not of kind.

But, not unexpectedly, also the defence of free competition from the opposite camp – as a basis of pluralism - is even more ambiguous and never wholesale. The lack of belief in the benefits of free competition opens up for quite substantial reservations, but still, both sides of the controversy on restrictions to media ownership, deregulation etc. share positions, in some partial respect.

However, as a number of the previous analyses might have shown, the empirical demonstration of one or the other standpoint is mostly contestable, and moreover, in a rather fundamental way, philosophical standpoints, though seldom explicit, tend to permeate the entire discussion, also on political choices on a rather concrete level.

---

**Creating and Promoting Pluralism in Cultural Production in Europe**

As anyone reading this study will have noted, its main focus is at a certain distance from the concrete concerns of media companies, and also from the everyday business of media policies and cultural policies. This is, as stated already in the preface, programmatic: the job of a scholar is not to suggest private members motions in parliaments or submit White Papers to governments. Since I have, incidentally, also been involved in such matters, nationally and internationally (Council of Europe), for a rather long time, I will, in order to get some concretion into the discussion at this rounding-up stage of the study present some ideas on how pluralism in the field of cultural production might be attained, or at least promoted. These ideas are not thought to be anything but rather conventional, though at least some of them have not, to my knowledge, been suggested, even less implemented.

European institutions, both the European Union and the Council of Europe, in their long-standing approach to the issue of media concentration, have, by and large, defined it as the opposite of pluralism in the media sector. “The media sector” has been understood in various ways, but including mostly also entertainment production for television, feature films etc., by far the most important economic parts of the media – and consequently of prior importance to the European Union, with its traditional focus on economic integration. xxx

Cultural production in a more extended sense has not been an issue of the same political attention. One reason for this is the treaty-based (Art 151 of the EU Treaty) principle of non-intervention in the cultural policies of the EU member states. This has, however, not prevented the union from adopting legislation on broadcasting and film production support systems etc. Since
the media are normally overlapping with the most important sections of cultural production, through film/television entertainment and phonogram production, measures devoted to media in the narrower sense, that is, radio, television and press, are regularly also affecting the wider field of cultural production. This is clearly demonstrated in the ambiguous formula of Article 151 itself of the EU Treaty, where “audiovisual production” is set out as an aspect of cultural policy, but included in a general understanding in the competence of the Union – as testified by the existence of several legally binding texts on television broadcasting and film production.

As mentioned, the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation on Measures to promote media pluralism\(^450\), which outlines policies and measures, whereas the EU draft for a directive on restrictions to media ownership in the single market of the Union\(^451\), after strong pressures and lobbying from both the industry and some Member states (notably, the then CDU-governed, Germany), never came up for political decision on the official level, although widely circulated and discussed for many years after the presentation of the “Green Paper” in 1992 by the European Commission. The main idea was to introduce a general threshold of media ownership (radio and television) of 30% by one single corporation or group of controllers. In spite of discussions in the European Parliament, the issue has not been in the focus of political interest – although fusions and concentration of ownership has continued, perhaps even accelerated in some media branches and regions. Ongoing efforts in the EU are focussing exclusively on “indicators” of media pluralism, thus avoiding more direct political confrontations.

The scholarly debate on the issue has, however, been extensive: On April 11, 2007 Google Scholar announces 16 100 articles under the keyword “Measures to promote pluralism in the media”.

FIVE ROADS TO PLURALISM

By and large the menu of possible interventions in the market might be divided into two groups: interventions in the production and distribution chains, and interventions on the consumer level. The two groups of measures obviously could not be entirely separated: consumers are dependent on suppliers, and vice versa. Still, interventions might have a radically different character – and somehow blur the customary demarcation lines between traditional political approaches.

The list below reproduces some ideas on what a policy for promotion of pluralism in cultural production (and distribution of products!) might imply, taking the media sector as a model, but in some sense also having possibilities of application in other sectors of cultural production. Many of these ideas are already in some or other form either applied or being discussed somewhere in the world, and most of them are listed in the European Recommendation mentioned above.

The five groups should not, of course, be taken to exhaust the list of possible policies but rather to give an overview of political issues at stake, as far as measures directed to the production and distribution chains. The second kind of interventions – directed to consumers or users – is much less discussed, and therefore much poorer in variations. It is briefly touched upon in this study and was inspired by some observations of the US media economist and legal scholar Edwin Baker\(^452\) on newspaper structure, after a study of, among others, the Swedish press production subvention system.

Although the measures are designed to fit the media sector they might also be related to other sectors of cultural production – not only because most kinds of cultural production are linked to some degree of media distribution, but also because the approach chosen for “cultural policies” in the narrow sense is for a large part one of production support, such as financing cultural institutions, grants, education etc for the fine arts or the cultural heritage sector. Obviously

\(^{450}\) R (99)1 of the Council of Europe.

\(^{451}\) Pluralism and Media Concentration in the Internal Market. 23 December 1992 (COM (92) 480 final)

\(^{452}\) Baker 1994
this financial responsibility for the cultural production also implies, in a varying degree, a subversion for the user or “consumer” of these services. This applies for research, education, the legal sphere, etc. though this is not often included in the same panoply of social spheres as culture in the narrower sense. Still, these functions are in most countries for a major part regarded as national or public functions, in spite of recent trends to privatize and “deregulate”.

1 Regulations

Regulations might be classified along a hierarchy of priority in most organised societies, as, for example, constitutional law, ordinary law, decrees, regulations, bye-laws and case law.

The most important kind of regulatory restrictions, viz. censorship, is prolific: historically speaking, it is more the rule than the exception in cultural production. This is also the major reason for the reticence in democratic societies to intervene in the press. The criterion of accepting regulatory intervention has therefore been a real, and credible, separation between interventions in “content” and interventions in “structure”.

One other fundamental, philosophical, consideration must accompany any kind of recommendation as to the advisability/feasibility of introducing regulatory measures to promote pluralism, viz. the efficiency of regulations. Quite generally, the function of laws is slightly contradictory: if nobody steals, a law would not be needed to prevent theft, and moreover, legal discourse includes both prevention and punishment/revenge as possible functions. A regulation is normally made in order to change the process of events, and often primarily to put an end to certain practices. On the other hand a regulation is not really supposed to change the world totally, just a little…

These remarks might seem both naïve and/or cynical, but, judging from the concrete European experience of media regulation, they acquire some relevance. Actually, the main function of some of the most detailed regulatory systems on media concentration might, crudely, be said to be not efficient, but rather to give a kind of cloak to already existing structures in media structure. The Italian “Mammi” law, or the French restrictions to press ownership do not really seem to be honestly designed to halt the expansions of national media empires, like those of Berlusconi, Hersant, Lagardère or others. Likewise, British media regulation seems perfectly designed to suit the interests of the dominant media owner of that country, Rupert Murdoch. And Norwegian restrictions just left the existing interests of Schibsted, Germany’s to Bertelsmann etc. untouched, although some bridles on their expansion was mounted.

Obviously some kind of efficiency is always there – if only to gain rhetorical points, or mislead public opinion, or – in the British case – engage Murdoch as an ally for New Labour, and thus win elections. …

Regulation as a measure to intervene on a market might also be, however, an accepted and efficient kind of measure. Competition legislation has at least sometimes decisive influence on markets. The European Commission has given a high priority to competition and has, undoubtedly, scored some success.

Regulatory levels

In most countries regulation of cultural production involves several levels.

The constitutional level normally guarantees freedom of expression, for the media, the arts etc.

For radio, television, and to some extent also the press, usually some “ordinary” legislation, regulates these media, together with other kinds of regulations, for example licence conditions, decrees of various kinds etc.
Special regulations on ownership, and consequently the right to purchase and launch new media enterprises, exist in a number of, not to say most countries. These regulations\(^4\) sometimes are special cases of competition regulation, in some countries separate regulations sometimes for the media sector as a whole, sometimes just for parts of it, such as the press. The British, Italian and French cases have been mentioned.

In some countries competition regulation also applies to the media, in some countries it does not or applies only partially – thus, for example, in Sweden competition regulation just applies to the advertising aspects of the media, not media as a whole.

**Voluntary regulations**

In addition to statutory or public regulations, attempts have been made to introduce voluntary restrictions to media ownership. The Dutch agreement between newspapers to restrict purchases and fusions to a total share of maximally 1/3 of the national newspaper market has been mentioned.

Attractive as it might appear to the industry, in avoiding statutory restrictions, these agreements are faced with difficulties from the competition point of view – they obviously distort competition, in the most orthodox understanding, and might even be regarded as a kind of cartel.

2 Money

**Suppliers**

Governance is often a question of allocating public resources. Accordingly, one rather common way of intervening from a public authority in any part of society is to provide subventions, or to, negatively, allow tax benefits, to some or other favoured production actors or areas. In cultural production this is the main avenue chosen for the arts and the cultural heritage: state intervention goes by way of funding.

Including also education, legal norm-construction and application, research and religion in the field of cultural production etc. this way of managing a structure in society is also the rule, albeit in some sectors with rather considerable exceptions, such as private schools. Actually some of these systems, like law-making and application, are regarded as back-bones of an organised society as such.

Money could be used in a number of ways – positively and negatively: by adding and by detracting. Some examples may be given from the the media sector.

- **Direct** support to the media in the private sector is, on the whole, rather rare – exceptions to this rule are Sweden, Norway and in a minor degree France, which give some direct production support to the press.
- The **public** media in radio and television are mostly subsidized to an essential degree by licence fees (=taxes) or direct contributions. And the Internet is, to a large degree, still a result of public support and/or initiatives – for its infrastructure, supervision etc.

For other cultural production fields the direct subvention method is mostly the case. “Cultural policies” are often simply understood as support systems to the arts, or the cultural heritage, by way of direct funding of institutions, educational training, or by way of grants etc.

- **Indirect** subventions, for example lowered VAT rates, distribution support etc. are rather frequent in many countries. Divergent views are voiced as to whether this is a subvention or just part of a general tax system. The film sector, book production, as well as television and radio are involved in such discussions\(^4\).

\(^4\) For a survey see diverse publications, such as those published by Zenith, European Publishers Council, as well as diverse accounts given by the Council of Europe etc.

\(^4\) the relationship is sometimes complex: the Swedish public television company (SVT) would actually *profit* from being included in the VAT system, due to the opening of deduction for expenses made.
Negative

- The classical approach to negative management in economic terms is taxation. Taxation might be used as a policy instrument by imposing taxes on diverse products, both by differentiating rates between products and by simply imposing taxes on products or services for some purpose, either to reduce consumption of those products (like alcohol or tobacco) or for finding income to the public sector, or both, which is a classical dilemma in most liberal democracies.

A special method of influencing media structures already practised in some countries, though harshly criticised, is taxation of publicity. In Sweden newspaper advertising is subject to taxation, on a flat rate, but deductions are possible for smaller newspapers – in practise a tax exemption for poorer small newspapers. A method not tested is to introduce some form of progressive tax rate for publicity, notably, if a levelling effect of taxation is desired, just as for income taxes. In the newspaper sector, and perhaps in all advertising-dependent media, therefore a progressive advertising tax rate might be a rather effective method to reduce differences in market positions between media companies – positions, which are, as has been discussed repeatedly, behind the problems of concentration of some parts of the media sectors. A progressive advertising tax is a drastic intervention in the market mechanisms of commercial media, and will, certainly, meet strong resistance from the media industry. Nevertheless it might, if political courage and will permits this kind of intervention, be worthwhile trying, though not very opportune – advertising taxes seem in general to be rather abandoned than expanded or raised. There is, moreover, also a more general political argument for this kind of taxation: if “the information society” is a reality, then sources of taxation should also be adapted to this new structure. And what is more natural to use as a tax source then, than commercial information?

- Another “negative” way of managing cultural production by money is concession fees, levied on licence holders in radio and television. This kind of fee is based on the view that the electromagnetic frequency spectrum is a national public asset and therefore could be sold or leased according to the public interest. These licence fees might actually in some cases be a rather important expense for broadcasters, and are also in some cases in reality progressive, that is, the rate depends on the level of income of the company in question\textsuperscript{455}. Obviously also taxation on Internet sites might be envisaged – though, like all taxation, possible to evade.

**Make them pay!**

The headline is inspired by media economist Robert Picard\textsuperscript{456} and it is (cf. below!) one of the suggestions which may cross demarcation lines between “socialist” and “liberal” (or “conservative”) approaches to media policy – or as I try to make out in this study – cultural production in general (as applicable). The idea is rather simple: for those actors in the field of cultural production who aim at enlarging their shares in the market, beyond the limits of what is considered to be the public interest, there should be installed some mechanism of levying fees on the business transactions thus, reducing the economic benefits of expansion and fusion drives. It is well known that expansion and fusions often benefit managers and executives rather than share-holders, and perhaps therefore these mechanisms should also aim at in some way reducing the benefits for top executives of media firms.

The device to some extent reminds of the “Tobin tax” suggested for financial international transactions. The manner of levying such fees might be worked out in many ways, and as a matter of fact models are found in various fields of society. In the environmental field – where the (much-disputed but still agreed-to) mechanism of trade in carbon dioxide emissions has been established with its quota and costs for any transgression of a quota. This system is international, and actors are states, consequently. A national system should be easier to administer and to work out in some detail. Such a system requires a legal basis, but it will meet demands of flexibility, often asked for by commercial actors. Such a system might, to satisfy “liberals”, also include public actors – thus stimulating also a kind of pluralism in the public cultural production sector.

Another model of making expansion less attractive is a system, where the profit margins of a dominant media actor are considerably cut by way of a concession fee, linked to the level of profit of the

\textsuperscript{455} The model has been practised in Sweden for the almost monopolistic commercial terrestrial analogue TV channel TV 4.

\textsuperscript{456} In a lecture in Kalmar, Sweden, Oct 17 2006.
company in question. It might actually be considered a kind of progressive publicity tax (see above!) since the income is almost exclusively derived from sale of publicity space/time.

A major difficulty for these and other “liberal” models is the diversification of companies within the same sphere of business interest, mostly ownership/controller group\textsuperscript{457}. The internal pricing of company activities split between independent result units (a well-known practice since the Konzerne in Germany of the 1930-s, and later trans-national corporations) is difficult to master for external controllers in the public sphere. Ways of evasions are abundant, and new taxation rules are mostly already foreseen by shrewd business lawyers… One of the difficulties is the need for some kind of international monitoring mechanism, agreed to by the major powers in the world, public and private… Nevertheless such systems might have a non-negligible effect on the business practises in the sector.

**Money and demand**

One way of using money as a political instrument is giving it to producers or suppliers. Another way of intervening is the other side of the economic dialectic: the demand sphere. This might be done in two ways, well known to most political decision-makers: negatively and positively, just as on the production side.

**Negative**

• The classical negative measure of influencing demand is rationing, mostly applied for example in crisis situations where supply is deficient, or in other situations where the supply is simply not judged to be managed by demand, for example because production is judged to be directed to the “true needs” of the people, to war production, or to those who are in most need, in precarious situations etc. Other restrictions or even prohibitions of supply might be applied because social or other considerations (drugs, moral solidarity etc.) convince public opinion of the justification of such measures.

In the more recent history of the media the rationing of newspaper print considerably influenced production structure, to the effect of reducing some competitive advantages of the more affluent producers, dominating the publicity market. This had in some measure also the effect of promoting competitive equality on the consumer market – just as the single-copy sale of newspapers is still more dependent on consumer choice than advertiser policies.

The introduction of rationing coupons for media material has, to my knowledge, not been practised in any country, although it is a possibility, in a situation of deficient supply. This possibility will be discussed later – in a somewhat utopian spirit. It has obviously a lot of practical and political snags.

• Taxation, as mentioned, is also a method of influencing demand – examples are alcohol, tobacco and luxury taxes.

**Positive**

• On the positive side, the practice of demand subvention in the field of culture (in the wide sense) is standard, in various forms. The most frequent are public subventions to, or funding of, cultural institutions, public media corporations and the like. These subventions might actually be regarded both as production support and demand subventions, since entrance fees to museums or opera houses etc. will usually be just a small part of the funding. Public broadcasting is, mostly (though not in the US), for its major part tax (licence) funded, but “free” for the user/taxpayer after the tax is paid. This way of funding public services is not entirely unique. Land surveying services are sometimes paid the same way. This kind of demand support includes a process of selection of those activities or services, which should be subsidised.

• In many social fields partial subventions are practised, this may be considered even the core of social policies. The example of lunch coupons has been mentioned – it is common in most Western

\textsuperscript{457} the same Swedish company TV 4 has now been integrated within the larger family controlled sphere Bonniers, and since the family has not wished introduction to the stock exchange of its main controlling companies, transparency of the transactions (including pricing and billing) is rather restricted.
countries. In most cases it is however directed to more basic social needs, such as medical care, law and order, elementary social care for the poor, housing, education etc.

In the case of lunch meals – transgressing inherited borderlines between liberal and socialist ideologies - freedom of consumer choice is encouraged (to the detriment of public subventions to canteens of institutions and companies) and thereby both the establishment of new enterprise in lunch services and restaurants is encouraged, and the encouragement of not skipping meals is supposed to further public health and wellbeing of citizens... Since the use of these coupons are not intensely supervised, they are usable on a black market (just as the foreign currency coupons in ancient Communist Europe) and tend to be used also for other products than lunch meals. They, briefly, function as a kind of secondary currency with restricted use, a paradox in a world where convertibility is becoming practically universal among ordinary currencies, and where currency unification is sought (in the EU for example).

In the more or less utopian case of introducing “coupons” in other, less prioritized, areas – such as culture - than luncheon meals for (the rather well-fed) working people, considerations of a similar nature would be necessary.

Nevertheless, this kind of positive demand subvention is also thinkable in the cultural field, including the media sector. The crux is – just as for cultural policies in general – the selection of products for which the “coupons” might be used. Should citizens (in this imagined situation) enjoying media (cultural) coupons subsidized by the public, be allowed to buy pornography, just as they are allowed to buy junk food, instead of “real” healthy food? How does one eliminate or tackle the tendency of business to “pander to lower desires” of human beings, in the reign of mind, just as in the reign of digestion...

Again, however, the same problem arises in all situations of social policies: levelling out social differences by public policies implies some kind of “governance”, that is a system of entrusting decisions to some other people than those directly concerned (clients, patients etc.). Accordingly, there is not a dramatic difference between consumer subsidies for luncheons and for the media. The most serious objection to this kind of system applied for the media would be: how does one avoid selections on a political basis? This is, again, however an objection which could be returned: how does one avoid a selection on other grounds – such as the fact that most media, in virtue of market mechanisms, are controlled by people who share a common political view, as well?

The answer seems obvious: in a democratic structure there has to be an equilibrium and respect for diverse political interests and a minimum of consensus, even across sharp social and ideological borders – this is the essence of a society as such, and a fortiori a pluralist democracy.

3 “Counter-powers”

The state
The history of state (public) intervention in culture and the media is mostly a history of “representation” in the Habermasian sense discussed above, and the history of “counter-powers” to the media in general is one of propaganda. Media studies, let us recall, originate in the study of propaganda in wartime. Propaganda is often used in combination with some kind of rationing of information, either by formal censorship or by systematic manipulation or control of information, management of self-censorship, or “manufacturing of consent” in Chomsky’s and Herman’s words. These kinds of measures are implemented both by democratic countries, and – evidently, systematically, non-democratic regimes. One version of this was the practice of “embedding” journalists into the US and UK invasion forces in Iraq in 2003. One might classify this strategy as regulation of production, but obviously there are other subtler, economic, aspects involved in most of these activities: some journalists, but not others, are paid for, invited etc.

On the other hand, the fear and experience of state control has not prevented democratic governments to act in the cultural sector by engaging directly in the production of media content. The most frequent example is the existence of public media, whether media under state owner-
ship - mostly broadcasting - or regulated by the state. But also other public levels, such as com-

munities, associations financed by public funds, etc. might occur as actors, side by side with

private or organisation-run media.

Public media – whether owned formally by public bodies or by way of some kind of trus-
teeship, foundation or body of a similar status – have in the Western democracies in Europe

mostly been surrounded by a consensus which acknowledged their quality ambitions and their
capacity to safeguard pluralism in broadcasting, as well as or better than the private sector. This

consensus has been radically undermined by the drastic increase in distribution facilities and also

contested both by the commercial broadcasting media corporations, and by liberal or right-wing

Neo-liberal political interests, and last but not least the European Union. The outcome has been

“deregulation” of earlier public monopolies, while still retaining a share of public broadcasting,

competing, more or less, with private enterprise.

In Eastern Europe, as well as in many other parts of the world, which have been or are still

suffering from authoritarian or dictatorial governments, the situation and general public opinion

is rather different, for obvious reasons. Public control over broadcasting is rarely, by public opin-

ion in these countries, linked to pluralism or diversity of political expressions.

In Western European democracies, models for public broadcasting vary considerably, as

regards ownership, programme requirements and constraints, and financing. The traditional

model worldwide remains the British Broadcasting Corporation. With due respect for this corpo-

ration and its traditions, it should be kept in mind that the BBC was launched in a medium-sized

European country, which was the hub of an empire exercising its power in a far from democratic

way over territories all over the world. This democratic state governed, by dictatorial means, over

hundreds of millions of people, most of them poor, exploited and deprived of elementary human

rights such as freedom of expression, democratic influence and dignity.

So far, only broadcasting has, in the media sector, been subject to a major influence by the

public sector in democratic societies – including the United States (cf. McChesney). Only recently

the public sector has been involved in new media enterprise: the Internet might be regarded as a

public media outlet infrastructure, although mainly being operated by private interests and very

little controlled by regulators. The anarchistic character of the Internet is, however, as yet, not

adapted to a fully fledged capitalist market structure, though corporate influence and monopolisa-

tion is quite advanced in some aspects, the best examples being the PC operative systems of

Microsoft and search engines like Google.

The public sector has, moreover, so far, not had any inhibitions as to its use of Internet

media activities: actually the public sector is among the most prolific users and actors on the

World Wide Web, by way of innumerable sites, services and communication networks. Regula-
tions of these activities are far from the ambitions of regulations of broadcasting activities by

public bodies. Instead these have been engaged in rather unregulated marketing activities and in-

formation, and nobody seems to have any major objections to this engagement, wholly or mostly

financed by public funds.

It should be recalled that public engagement in the media sector is also very large in the

rich flora of information activities, constantly expanding over the years, by way of publications,
(periodical or monographic) from public authorities and institutions. This aspect of the media

landscape seems to deserve much more effort from the research community.

One hypothesis which might be suggested for this kind of research, is that the gradual mo-
nopolisation or oligopolisation of traditional media outlet sectors like daily newspapers or

terrestrial commercial broadcasting in many countries is to some extent counterbalanced – mostly

innocuously – by increased activities on the side of public authorities.

By and large the age of liberalisation has also, it seems, been an age where public institu-
tions have engaged, if not in a monopolistic position, but in a much more active manner than

before, in media activities. Internet is the first arena today, but also the intense investment in in-
formation staff, and material, press contacts etc. testify to this increased engagement. An
examination of the increase of funds invested in these matters would probably yield rather stunning results.

One might regard this development as a case of convergence in political action strategies: “Socialism” continues to exert a rather considerable influence, although it is formulated within a kind of liberalistic discourse in terms of necessities of “marketing” public activities (museums, schools, authorities like police, army etc.).

The civil society
Referring to “counter-powers” in the media sector, the attention needs to be directed not only to the public sphere, i.e. the state and local authorities etc. but also to other non-profit making activities. The classical example is the kind of media outlets of organisations, working most of the time in parallel with commercial or public media products.

The growing role of the Internet has brought about a radically new situation, at least potentially, putting at the disposal of practically everyone, in the affluent world – despite the talk of the “digital divide” - and also the “mid-income” world, the possibility of opening web-sites, blogs, setting up mailing lists etc.

This new facility opens up a new dimension, from the communication point of view, to the notion of a “civil society” sphere. Community radio and (cable) television already before the Internet became much more affordable and also tolerated, and in some cases encouraged by state authorities. The Internet has shaped a new space where organisations, associations, local groups and interregional or international networks of activists, of people just sharing common interests, whether political, religious or cultural, in the largest sense of that term might share information and develop their views.

The impact of these media activities are still difficult to assess properly, but for example Manuel Castells – already 10 years ago - attributed a cardinal role, in the “information age”, to the new social movements, which have been growingly exploiting this new communication space. The political discussions within these movements and towards more traditional power forums – symbolically represented by the World Economic Forum gatherings in Davos – are only occasionally reaching the surface of the traditional media ocean. Perhaps the strength of these movements and their impact on political events should not be overestimated – sometimes it seems to be a kind of second breath of the movements of the 1970s in the Western world. Nevertheless the phenomenon of the new information structure opening up a field of communication to wide and dispersed groups of people should be observed, on a par with the traditional public and private media and cultural production outlets. The “re-feudalisation” process referred to above in the field of power structures and economy might be faced with a kind of counter-process centred on the rather vaguely defined sphere of “civil society”. The latest (2008) presidential campaign in the US is generally considered to be a break-through of new methods of accessing and mobilising the general public (incl. fund-raising!) by way of new media, such as Internet-based services, mobile phone structures, SMS etc.

As Castells points out, all new social movements are far from “progressive” or left-wing. On the contrary, for example Christian evangelical movements in the Americas, as well as the Islamic fundamentalists in Asia and North Africa (and Europe to some extent) rather tend to combat traditionally rationalist, “progressive” or “enlightened” values of the democratic West.458 Media representing these, literally, reactionary trends are found everywhere in the world, in radio and in the print media, and on the Internet. Clashes between the respect for freedom of information and expression on one hand and the respect for social cohesion and resistance to hatred and racial prejudice on the other, are frequent.

---

458 The rather hot discussions after the speeches in 2006 of Pope Benedictus XVI on one of the last Byzantine emperors, and the head of the Vatican ecumenical department Cardinal Kasper on secularization in the occidental tradition in 2007, has demonstrated the delicate nature of these relations, within the largest Christian denomination, and in its relations to other religions and secular society.
The case of local radio and pluralism might be illustrative, in many countries (US, France, Sweden) for the role, which might, or might not, be played by diverse actors in the media field; state, local government, non-governmental organisations and business enterprise. The fact seems to be that, if local radio – at least before the advent of the Internet the cheapest way of establishing a media outlet – is not propped up by public systems, and backed up by the journalistic community, it is not likely to play the role which it, theoretically, might have done for a pluralistic media landscape. The complete failure of the Swedish commercial private radio in this respect should be a sign of warning, as also the Swedish community radio network, simply because this reaches very few. The mushrooming Internet radio services (an estimation gives 14 000 stations, currently), seldom reach more than a modest audience.

4 Information

The following two ways of promoting pluralism in cultural production, are more “inward looking”, since they both rely on cultural production themselves, not external interventions or structural facilities.

It is sometimes difficult to make out sufficiently clearly the impact of “immaterial” and informal ways of action in the context of power relations. Nevertheless, these kinds of strategies may often turn out to be much more effective than other action – relying again on Bourdieu’s notion of social and cultural capital, of which information and knowledge might constitute subspecies.

Information is often referred to, as a last resort, by politicians, who do not see, or want to use, more “invasive” means of action. Notwithstanding this rather low prestige, it may be an underestimated means of concrete action – as is demonstrated by the tendency of powerful actors in the political arena to keep information in important aspects secret. To reveal contexts, connections, political or economic strategies might be a more powerful instrument than legislation or (normally rather modest) economic interventions, by subsidies or other means. Satires, scandals and revelations of corruption affairs have more quickly than ordinary political action changed the course of events and positions in the “opinion space”. Transparency in ownership of cultural production facilities, and media conglomerates, is, consequently one way of promoting public alerts on risks of media concentration. The Council of Europe has adopted another recommendation with this purpose, viz. the Recommendation on measures to promote media transparency (R (94) 13).

The kind of information relevant in the context is both insight in the strategies and actions of individual media actors, and overviews, surveys and structural evaluations of more consolidated situations, local, national and international.

The crucial parameter for the efficiency of this instrument is continuity: if information is collected for a particular study or situation, there is a risk that it is soon forgotten. If it is, on the other hand, kept alive in some kind of easily accessible information storage system, a database, an Internet site etc. the usefulness and efficiency of the instrument will increase radically. Basically, the construction of such an international system is well under way, by the means of Internet sites, networks and link systems, involving universities, observatories of various kinds, such as the MediaWatch network etc. An “early warning system” for cultural pluralism presupposes an information function – it is the backbone of such a system.

In some countries transparency is reluctantly accepted by media operators, but it seems to be gradually more accepted also among media owners.

And – probably also due to the interest of using the Internet as a forum for marketing both single media outlets and trade marks of larger business groups in the field - the exposition of the multiple activities, and broad range of ownership, of individual corporations and conglomerates seems in general to have acquired a prestige which overruns interests of discreetness and secrecy.
In most developed market economies competition authorities have an obligation to monitor markets and intervene if monopoly or cartel tendencies arise. In the media field this monitoring task is normally also included, but general agreement seems to be at hand (cf. for example the position of the European Commission Green Paper from 1992) that competition regulation is too slow and misses the essential points of media policy.

Information should, just as in the case of the ideal regulation on natural environment protection, be based on a principle of a burden of proof resting on those who intend to make a move in the market. A principle of prudence, as for drugs and chemical products might recommend itself.

5 Research

The other side of the information-supplying coin is the activity of retrieving information. Every scholar has this kind of focus in her or his work, but also other information activities are well known, if not reputed – the “intelligence” of military and political institutions is characterized by seeking information from all kinds of sources (including illegal ones) in order to set up a picture which serves the strategic purposes of one or other actor. The critical reader of this study will, of course, note that this way of action for the promotion of cultural pluralism is also a plea with an egocentric touch: a plea for the strategic role of research in the political arena.

It is not sufficient for strategic planners of any political field to receive information, which is served by the involved or interested parties in a political arena. Any politician or opinion organiser has to try to formulate or construct scenarios, using forecasts and analytic schemes, beyond the information delivered by actors in a political field.

Closely related to monitoring and market observation, and information measures prescribed for market operators (such as transparency), is the setting up of a more strategic, that is long-term, system of previsions and monitoring potential developments related to the control of cultural production, primarily the media. This kind of long-term and long-range study system is related to, and an ingredient of, a cultural observatory function of an “early warning system”. It will predominantly have to be based on academic institutions, since state and private institutions are likely to be too dependent on more immediate political trends and/or business interests. An “arms-length” distance from everyday politics is required. Models might, in the field of cultural production be borrowed from other societal fields – including both business and production economic development - but perhaps more so from defence and strategic policy institutes, all institutions with a long tradition of future-oriented research and strategic forecasting.

Traditionally, these institutes deal with “hard-core” political, economic and social matters. Again, Castells’ work might be referred to as an argument for extending attention to cultural considerations, such as those related to general debates on the role of religion, notably of “fundamentalist” tendencies occurring in the US Christian/evangelical right, Jewish colonist groups in Palestine, Moslem/shiite activism, as well as Hindu extremist movements etc.

In trade relations the growing role of cultural production in a strategic context is illustrated by the above-mentioned discussions on the “cultural exception”, and the recently adopted Unesco convention on cultural diversity. ‘Cultural’ includes in most contexts here also primarily the media, notably in the increasing importance awarded in economic global relations to artistic and entertainment industries (creative industries).

It is of crucial importance to keep developments under observation from many aspects, but clearly also the long-term construction and reconstruction of cultural production centres, power spheres and forces. The first step in this process is the monitoring system sketched above, but this system has to be supplemented by analytical and future-oriented research effort. Just as the short-term information/monitoring system analytical and systematic research will, however, also be of major importance also to policy-makers and public opinion. The very insight that the structure of cultural production control mechanisms is both monitored and analysed in a more deep-
going research effort is likely to affect strategies of individual firms and conglomerates, and therefore also affect structural developments in the media sector. Again, comparing to military and strategic studies, the secrecy of strategies and the insights into the operative models of the adversaries are in themselves powerful ingredients in controlling possible developments. The Cold War gave birth to very sophisticated models of study and analysis of this category of political-strategic forecasting. Social science, apart for describing structures, has also a predictive ambition, just like most other scientific undertakings. But predicting means, in many contexts, also a possibility of controlling future events. This, obviously, is the very heart of technology as such: constructing methods of controlling future events.

Compensation, controversies and paradoxes

The approach to cultural production power relations in this study is focussed on the media sector, rather than the other parts of cultural production, in the sense understood by Bourdieu, Cassirer and others. Its principal interest in some specific issues of the media sector, that is news production, current affairs reporting and comments, influencing public political opinion etc. is a traditional approach. The focus on media interplay with politics - separated from other segments of cultural production, such as the arts, education, religion or research - is mostly justified by the central role of the mass media within cultural production as a whole, for political pluralism in society, as argued in preceding sections.

Broadening, mainstreaming, neutrality

Growing consolidation and concentration of markets and actors in the traditional mass media sector contrast with some other, in some respects positive, trends from the point of view of pluralism. Since these other trends are often brought forward as a compensatory development, some remarks on a few of them are justified. As noted, the subject has recently been examined by C. Edwin Baker.

“Broadening” of the remaining news and reporting services after concentration of markets, or market segments (such as daily newspapers in a local market) is taken to mean that the remaining outlets in a given market tend to give a more diversified, from a political point of view, account of public opinion after the closure of a competitor. This evolution might be an economic interest for the remaining media outlet controller, in trying to take over all or most of the subscribers or buyers of the defunct outlet. This move, on the other hand, might go counter to the more specific political interests, if any, of the media owner, and therefore might be adopted only rather selectively and gradually. As noted already, the slogan that the only interest of media business controllers is to make money does not really constitute the total truth. Power, or capital, in Bourdieu’s sense, has many faces.

This kind of change is generally supported by the journalistic profession – which might gain a growing independence from the owners in this way. Professionalisation has, generally, implied stepping back from more profiled political standpoints in media outlets.

On the other hand, this process of “broadening” of content and political/ideological diversity of media outlets might be accompanied by a tendency of reducing the same diversity, in the ambition of striving to consensus and reduce differences. Diverse points of view are then likely to be coached in a kind of unifying discourse. Experience from the US newspaper structure is often mentioned. This aspiration towards consensus also tends to “mainstreaming”, in the sense of excluding what is considered, in the relevant market, as extreme opinions. A consequence might actually be a Chomskyan dystopia of “manufacturing consent”.

“Objectivity” in the sense of neutrality between conflicting points of view, or in general avoidance of critical or controversial stories and positions thereby often become priorities both to media outlet controllers/owners and the general public. As any student of texts or other messages rapidly becomes aware, judgments as to the objectivity or neutrality of news reporting and political journalism are far from neutral themselves - the implausibility of a kind of Archimedean “externalistic” position is elementary. Scientific research – for example in history, historiography, culture or anthropology - imposes modesty and/or scepticism towards pretensions of being aloof to particular interests and perspectives, whether in research or other “story-telling” inquiries. The rejection of the “neutrality” of perspectives, however, should in no way be taken as a rejection of the possibility of expressing true statements or adequate generalisations in science, including both social and cultural research. xxx

Trust and profession

Professionalisation of the media has been discussed at length above, as a protection against autocratic or self-interest-driven media owners as well as against political pressures - a bulwark for independence from owners, whether capitalists or politicians.

Public opinion about the journalistic profession is however much less favourable in this respect – and Pierre Bourdieu might in this context represent a rather wide-spread attitude in his famous “On Television” from 1996. This diversity in attitudes is illustrated by the fact that, on one hand the admission to journalism training institutions is difficult for the applicants. On the other hand public opinion in popular discourse tends to be rather critical as a whole towards the profession – although some media, mostly public television newscasting, enjoy a high reputation for reliability. 459

Some of Chomsky’s and his collaborators’ views might be interpreted as a very negative position towards the journalistic profession as such, as being submitted to a high degree of pressures and obedience under external financial interests and subservient to the business strategies of media owners.

Criticism from an ethical point of view – of the journalistic profession as surrendering to sensationalism, breaking principles of personal privacy and integrity, and pandering to interests of entertainment rather than information and public clarity of opinion etc. – seems also to be ubiquitous in most countries where public debate is relatively unhampered. A world movement of ethics in journalism is growing as a response to this public distrust in the profession. 460 The growing professionalism of journalists does not seem to have made much of a difference in this respect.

In more autocratic states journalists may enjoy a better reputation, at least those journalists who do not follow orders but remain under hard pressure from authorities; historically Europe is well acquainted with these problems. Although professional training mostly universally subscribes to freedom of information, independent reporting and integrity, compromises and surrender to external pressure and self-censorship is daily practice. History in Europe has taught us how easily professional journalists could be integrated in brutal totalitarian systems. Hitlerite Germany and Leninist/Stalinist Russia were successful in mobilizing journalists, and other cultural producers alike 461, as actors in a web of oppression and terror, also demonstrating the worst sides of the interplay of cultural production fields, that is, legal systems, art, science, education and media. Professional training of journalists did not protect them from being recruited in the

459 In Sweden regular polls are made on the confidence of the media among the public. In France polls are regularly gauging the status of diverse professions – and journalists are frequently given a low score, together with politicians, and prostitutes.

460 The symposium (March 13-14, 2007) in Kalmar, Sweden on Media Accountability Systems, provided an occasion to discuss various aspects of this situation and the remedies suggested. Cf. von Krogh 2008. Another recent Swedish work has focussed on the personal responsibility of the individual journalist (Wigorts Yngvesson 2006).

461 Film makers like Leni Riefenstahl, theater producers like Gründgens, musicians like von Karajan, philosophers like Heidegger, Arnold Gehlen and to some degree Gadamer, Konrad Lorenz the ethologist, to name but a few of the most reputed examples.
service of these hangmen. Indeed it might even have contributed to the kind of excuses often heard by the torturers of these regimes: “It just did my job, obeyed my orders…” Professional training does not offer a guarantee, though professional ethics might do so, if practised, but this is largely independent of the professional skills in its more technical aspects. Actually experience – though statistical or significant scientific data are difficult to collect – would rather indicate that the training and ideals provided by journalism training institutions tend to dissipate rather quickly as the young journalist is confronted with the brutal realities of searching for scoops, breaking the news, satisfying her or his superiors in bringing their media outlet into the front line etc. etc. Not to speak of keeping up sales figures, both for advertising and consumer sales…..

Research methods exist for investigating attitudes held by journalists at various stages of their careers. Some of them have been tested (SOM-institute in Sweden, for example\textsuperscript{462}), but there is room for much more research in the field.

**Forms of Diversity/Pluralism**

Professionalisation of cultural production workers, notably journalists, as one remedy to the reduction of the opinion space following media concentration in the private sector (through market concentration, monopolization, oligopolisation, monopolistic competition, market division etc.), is an aspect which is supplemented by the distinction between different forms of diversity compensating for the disappearance of titles, owners or media outlets. The basic distinction applied is that between External and Internal Pluralism. The Council of Europe employed this distinction, in analysing the political function of the media in a democratic society.

**External pluralism**

The definitions proposed by the Council of Europe are rather simple: external pluralism is a kind of pluralism of the content of media whereby a multitude of media operators, competition in markets, diversity of independent owners, editorial units, titles, outlets etc. safeguards a diversity of opinions in basic political, ideological, cultural etc. respects to be expressed.

The very existence of all these diverse operators etc. does not itself constitute external pluralism – the heart of the matter is the content of the production, viz. the diversity of opinions, not the form or structure itself.

The typical counter-example, where the existence of a plurality of media outlets, cultural producers etc. does not safeguard pluralism in the salient sense used here, is television entertainment, for which operators tend to exploit the same approaches, formats, actors, presenters etc. in order to maximize advertising income.

The same situation might pertain in news reporting and current affairs production, where standards of reporting, journalistic habits and cultures etc. automatically lead to a kind of uniformisation of content production – irrespective of a multitude of external sources of production. The supply structures of news reporting, for example through various gate-keeping mechanisms like news agencies, networks etc., might also have a similar effect of “uniformisation” of the content of production, even in a very diverse external structure of production, allowing for many different independent producers, working under hard competition. This is the heart of Bourdieu’s criticism – and of a debate on the uniformisation of journalism.

Still, most observers tend to agree that, even if external pluralism is not a necessary consequence of a varied and rich competitive structure of actors, it is a favourable environment for pluralism. Whether this applies in equal measure to both public and private spheres of production might be a matter of discussion. Most discussions of pluralism in the external variety,

\textsuperscript{462} Cf. Elliot 1997.
however, concern the private sector - public media production tends to be more centralised, though in later years tendencies of decentralising public media production have been dominant. The forms have often involved strong “community” or civil society ingredients, sometimes with commercial or mixed funding etc. Public media production, in the sense of state or local authority controlled companies or outlets, is – as emphasised several times here – not equal to exclusively non-commercial financing. On the contrary, nearly every public media producer in the world has some degree of commercial revenue, from advertising, sponsoring, sales etc.

**Internal pluralism**

Internal pluralism refers to a diversity of content (of the relevant kind: political, ideological etc.) *within* a media outlet with a general news and public affairs ambition, or more generally, in a structure where few or just one media outlet or operator control or dominate the media landscape. This kind of pluralism is mostly prescribed for public broadcasters in democratic states, but it is frequently also professed by private media operators in monopoly structures.

Internal pluralism is often regarded as a quality stamp for content production itself, which of course could not be taken to imply that media outlets with specific profiles may be classified as low-quality media. Internal pluralism is mostly linked to *representativity*, whereby social groups or individuals may express their views, even in controversial matters, and against the interests or declared policies of the editors or controllers of the outlet in question.

In many countries operational criteria for content production may be set up, including internal pluralism. For example, British local private radio licensing policy has been geared to finding operators with different content production profiles, so as to avoid competition for the same formats in all areas. This policy has sometimes by operators been labelled a “beauty contest” since candidates for licences have to present their programme ambitions and are liable to sanctions if they digress too much from the declarations made as licences were granted. Also national TV licenses might be surrounded by rather strict criteria of providing space for different opinions, and sufficient space for current affairs and political debates. In discussions of the results of major commercial TV channels of France (TF 1) and Sweden (TV4) these obligations have been debated – critics from other political spheres have accused these channels of systematically ignoring promises given in the course of the “beauty contests” preceding the distribution of licenses.

Another scheme of safeguarding internal pluralism has been practised in Germany, where the “Land” Nordrhein-Westfalen grants a monopoly licence for local terrestrial broadcasting, provided the operator assumed the obligation to let the programme profiles be determined by a council of social organisations – and thus not submitted to purely commercial considerations (the “Two-pillars-model”). In Norway the “Declaration of independence” of journalists (Redaktørplakaten) has been transformed into statutory law.

Internal pluralism of a media outlet or cultural production unit depends, in the last course, on the control mechanism applied. Private ownership of media implies, basically, the absence of social control over production – and therefore also pluralism in the individual media product – this is the essence of a free media structure in a market economy.

This is the virtue of private cultural production, trivially, since the absence of public control over at least some media outlets opens a window for independent scrutiny both of government and other social actors, and thus is indispensable for democratic rule. And independent ownership and control of media outlets is a strong piece of resistance to political pressure, also in comparison with ever so “arms-length” protected and independently organized public media ownership.

Still, the dependence of private media production on commercial operators - advertisers or investors – renders the level of internal pluralism unpredictable and volatile. And the very good reason of existence of many media outlets is not to provide internal pluralism at all, but to open

---

463 [http://www.lfm-nrw.de/](http://www.lfm-nrw.de/)
to owners to be part of a larger media landscape, where their particular role is to represent particular interests, political parties or trends, cultural layers etc. This – quite desirable – structure of a media landscape implies that one particular media product or media owner might change the policy of their outlets, from an internal pluralism approach to a partisan medium, which in its turn is part of a structure of external pluralism, in case this exists, that is, that many diverse products are supplied to users. Which is, as we know, in many cases just wishful thinking.

Now, the judgement of private commercial media actors might depend on commercial realities alone or predominantly, and in a situation of monopoly it might be rather tempting to try to reap the highest degree of profits available, avoiding any kinds of conflicts with advertisers or powerful pressures which demand an exclusion of non favoured political opinions.

The fragility of internal pluralism in the commercial sector might, accordingly, be as high as in public media – the difference is that, in the private sector, no democratically elected instance is allowed– or indeed should be so! - to intervene to safeguard the internal pluralism of an outlet, in a case where it is being contested by new owners etc. Political responsibility must, obviously, be related to the media landscape as a whole, not to individual independent media outlets, except public ones.

In some countries (Belgium) journalist associations have the right to negotiate on some aspects when a political change of an outlet is announced, but mostly employees have to adapt to new regimes in the cultural production just as in any other production plants.

In the public sector, the guiding principle of cultural policy, in the extended sense covering also the media, has been the “arms-length” distance, and safeguards, between producers and decision-makers. Similar arrangements are not seldom practised in the private sector, but must obviously be subject to the decisions of the controllers/owners of the production unit concerned.

As discussed above, there is a risk linked to this necessary difference of structure between the public and private (including “civil society”) media; the notions of “objectivity” and “quality” – including internal pluralism - sometimes tend to be assumed as universal maxims for all media. Instead the sharp distinction between a media landscape as a whole (national, regional, local) and an individual outlet has to be recognized, whereby the “subjectivity” of one outlet might be a virtue, not a vice.

Also in the public cultural production sector, application of, and respect for, arms-length principles vary greatly. Particularly on the local level conflicts abound – and are often rooted in the absence of principles or regulations as to the division of roles between, for example artistic or editorial producers on one hand, and political funding authorities and leadership on the other. National production units are often more clearly regulated, and are, often being producers at an “elite” level, given a higher degree of independence. Government ministers do, for example, not normally intervene in production plans of theatres or television companies, but examples of local authority interventions are legio.

Multi-media, cross-ownership and pluralism

Pluralism in cultural production is almost universally regarded as an ideal: practically nobody denies its value, and any institution or public body which does not adopt the ideal even in theory, would be in blatant contradiction to declarations and conventions on human rights. The difficulties to pluralism arise, paradoxically, only in societies where democratic rule is genuinely established. Most authoritarian or undemocratic governments in the world (about half of the member states of the United Nations) pay lip-service to pluralism in cultural production, although they do not practice it, especially not in the mass media sector. But this situation does not need to occupy us. Hannah Arendt once said\textsuperscript{464} that the only people who really could have a bad conscience are good people – bad people normally have no problems of conscience!

\textsuperscript{464} In \textit{The life of the mind} p.191
Monopolisation is in this perspective one aspect of this “bad consciousness of democracies”.

The term “multi-media” is often used for media or cultural *products*, which involve several media techniques, not for production *units* or structures. Most importantly for the mass-media sector is the interplay of radio, television, newspapers with Internet productions on websites, including sound recordings and videos linked to these sites.

The notion might however also refer to media and cultural production units, such as business enterprises which engage in several media, such as books, films, sound recordings, Internet sites, newspapers, magazines, business information networks. Multi-media conglomerates, in this sense, are characteristic business constructions of the latest two decades in Western societies.

These structures are, by most managers and owners/controllers in the industry, regarded as a simple necessity, due to changes in media consumption habits, media technologies, and accordingly the requirement to diversify, spread risks and develop, by profiting from synergies in content production in one sector to a wider selection of media forms, for example by the entry of most newspapers on the Internet, but also the trend to go into commercial radio and sometimes television. Most of the larger global firms have followed this strategy – as might easily be confirmed by consulting their web sites or the Columbia University ownership site.

The proliferation of multi-media production structures may represent a danger to pluralism, simply because the same business enterprise which is successful in one media sector might use its economic force to enter another field, where monopolisation might occur quite violently. The entry of strong multi-media firms into book publishing might be examples of this development. Such evolutions might strongly affect the viability of traditional smaller firms operating on a limited specific market.

The entry of non-media business corporations in the industry is another phenomenon which has been rather common and which might have the same effect. The French media industry is thus largely owned by big industry corporations in the aeroplane, arms, water and building sectors (Dassault, Lagardère, Vivendi and Bouygues), and in the US both General Motors and General Electric, Sony and formerly the Seagram family have/had important holdings in the media sector, in Italy and Norway retail business has/had important or even dominant positions in the media sector (Berlusconi, Orkla). The Swedish media entrepreneur family Stenbeck based its economic force on the forestry industry, etc. etc. In many cases, still, media or cultural production industries tend to form their own closed business spheres, although controlled by large non-media business conglomerates, in the last run. Recent developments in the sector of scientific publishing show that venture capital interests play a growing role.

Also public service media companies tend to differentiate production, although not becoming genuine multi-media conglomerates, expanding activities in television, radio and Internet media, despite reduction of funding.

**Popular education in media and culture – elite and mass**

Political discussion or dispute about the dangers to pluralism in the cultural production, specifically the media, will sooner or later have to face the challenge of trying to define the areas of concern.

In most cases entertainment, sports, the arts and hobbies, leisure media, scientific periodicals and other specialized media production are not subject to political controversy. Mostly some features of the media are emphasized – sometimes expressed in solemn terms as the “tasks” or “remit” of the media in society, such as news and current affairs. For the “cultural media”, such as feature films, documentaries, installations, books, political magazines the freedom of the arts is invoked, just as the freedom of the press or broadcasting. The “cultural” media are, in traditional
cultural policies, awarded a high importance as a kind of educational zone, for the “people at large”, a role that sometimes clashes with the position of “popular” culture.

The gap between the role of the more “elite”-dominated media sector versus “popular” media poses problems when it comes to assessing the consequences of media concentration, in some degree linked to the previous discussion on “cultural studies”.

Since popular media are less devoted to “educational” aspects of information but to entertainment, and the extraordinary expansion of media channel supply is mostly geared to entertainment, this expansion inevitably challenges the equilibrium of traditional concepts of the “task of media in society” – for example as outlined in the legendary report from the Hutchins Commission in the US.

Since the vast majority of media supply is not engaged in endeavours central for the function of democratic institutions – viz. primarily news and current affairs reporting and political debates – and since media supply as a whole is growing at an accelerating pace, the selective moment in the political assessment of the role of media in society will become gradually more evident. Actually, most of the existing media production will have to be set aside – awarding to media outlets, such as political magazines, daily newspapers and public service broadcasting, a growing, proportionally speaking, role in a media landscape, where they tend to become less important… Their social and cultural capital increases, proportionally – or even disproportionately. The ideas on the “core tasks” or the “remit” of the media should be related to this rather delicate situation of the traditional mass media in the new media landscape.

This role is also linked to the ascription of educational functions in the democratic order – whereby the citizens are supposed to aspire at and acquire sufficient information on political choices and diversity of possible developments as consequences of these choices to exercise their function as “informed laymen” when using their rights of vote in elections and referenda.

The emphasis on the educational function of the media (and cultural production on the “elite” or “little” culture\(^{466}\) level) implies mostly also giving lower weight to “mass” culture or “popular” culture production. As indicated in the introductory section this poses a problem to any theory which aspires at explaining how a genuine “people’s rule” might work in contemporary societies of mass media and cultural production affluence. Is genuine cultural democracy a question of letting anyone buy anything available on a market, or offering the best cultural products and production facilities to anyone, irrespective of profit perspectives?

It is difficult to see that any solution could be anything else but “dialectical”, still relations between elite and mass culture, as described by the English historian Peter Burke\(^{467}\) remain, by and large, unidirectional: the elite has no difficulties in absorbing and participating in mass culture, whenever it chooses to do so, whereas the mass has to be educated in a particularly demanding sense to enter the field of elite culture. This implies that the existence of a wall between the elite and mass culture must be acknowledged, penetrable much more easily by the upper layers of society, from above, than from below. The process of penetration mostly presupposes that the masses accept canons and values of “those upstairs”, since these values are built into the very processes and institutions of education. It is a kind of trickle-down process.

This picture may arouse protests and opposition, even contempt and rage, from the proponents of “popular culture”, or “working-class values”. It may, actually, also in itself be considered a class perspective in scholarly disguise, as one might conclude from Bourdieu’s “Distinction”. Both “populism” in a political understanding (at the right as well as the left side of the political spectrum) and a more scholarly approach, such as the “cultural studies” trend of later decades, in communication and social studies, may be said to represent this opposition. Still, very seldom, however, canons, standards or values of the elite are radically overturned by protesters. Mostly marginal revisions are made, as is manifested in the cultural policies sketched by left-wing politicians in both democratic and undemocratic societies. Notably Communist cultural policies

\(^{466}\) Svante Beckman: *Big culture and little culture*

\(^{467}\) Burke 1978/94
were rather traditional in their approach to quality criteria. Other examples could be taken from Socialist cultural policy suggestions in Britain and Scandinavia\textsuperscript{468}, where also rather traditional and educational canons are taken for granted. The pioneering years of new values, formal approaches and technologies, such as those provided by aesthetic models of “Agitprop” in revolutionary Bolshevik Russia, might rather be regarded as an exception in this respect.

\textsuperscript{468} For an account of Swedish cultural policies from a historical point of view, cf. Frenander (2005), and for a penetrating study of all the five Nordic countries Duelund 2003.
PROSPECTS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN A NEW STRUCTURE

Some ways of future possible political action to further pluralism, in the media sector, have been outlined already. In this section some of the more general perspectives of cultural policy developments, also focussed on the media sector, will be analysed.

Market mechanisms, digitisation and pluralism

Digitisation opens up new avenues in the landscape of cultural production. Its impact on media pluralism challenges some customary political borderlines between market-liberalism and interventionists, for example by the possibility to encrypt all transmissions over various distribution channels. Encryption, already before digitisation long practiced in the television sphere, facilitates methods of payment hitherto not practicable on a wide scale outside the “physical” media sphere – such as newspapers, books etc. Encryption of digital material thus enables distribution of material against payment for single products, such as TV programmes, films, music, texts, books and subscriptions, and a wealth of other services, to diverse sorts of receivers, such as computers, mobile phones, TV sets etc. This possibility also opens new ways for financial arrangements of content production, both by way of small payments by buyers and a wide range of advertising arrangements, such as those practised for Internet publicity.\footnote{Internet advertising is expected to pass television publicity in economic terms very soon.}

This development means that existing funding systems such as publicity, taxes and licence fees are subject to modification or replacement by new and/or more sophisticated kinds of payment systems, by subscriptions of various kinds, pay-per-view, RSS-arrangements, or otherwise. It is likely that users of cultural products will face systems where the hitherto collectively funded products (like public service broadcasting) will be replaced or supplemented by pay-per-piece products, just as old-time newspapers, books etc. This “marketisation” process will meet resistance from people favouring collective funding cultural production.

On the other hand it will also – much more than was hitherto the case when deregulation of broadcasting was implemented – open for new ways of producing content for much smaller audiences, simply by demanding money for value. Newspapers have, in the paper media era, at least periodically, been able to flourish in a rather pluralistic structure, without any external financial support except advertising. Advertising as a source of subsidising content production and distribution is likely to continue, but nothing says that users of cultural products will not be willing to pay for cultural products, just as they today pay for books, records, films etc. (they do!!, despite downloading devices)!  

Whereas the developments sketched above seems to give rise to a new wave of “commercialisation” of cultural production, a reverse development is also perceivable: a new era of “gift economy” is facilitated by the huge amount of material put at the disposal of everyone who possesses a computer with access to the Web. One example is the ongoing project of “Google” to digitize all literature published and making it available, by some kind of arrangement that does not infringe upon copyright.\footnote{“Project Gutenberg” has already put at the disposal a wealth of “world literature” to users of Internet.}  

Also intermediate funding arrangements – e.g. shareware – are going in the opposite direction from “commercialising” cultural production, actually just continuing a widely used method of financing public broadcasting in the USA. And, as noted, the easiness of publishing on the Web might make it more difficult to preserve the prerogatives of professional content producers. This development is in its beginning, but goes so fast that prophecies are doomed to become out-dated very quickly.

From an interventionist point of view, on the other hand, the new possibilities of identifying and charging for products also opens new ways for public policies of support to selected
products or kinds of products, just as in present-day cultural policies, in the narrow sense. Just as many states today decide to finance cultural services and products by public funds, this remains possible, and indeed extended, for media products in a digitized structure, where automatic selection is much easier. A museum might be free, or paid for, just as a library loan, a newscast, or an art programme on TV. Digitization considerably facilitates this development. Thus for the media sector in the narrow sense a similar mechanism which regulated the funding of a pluralistic newspaper sector might be envisaged also for electronic products, subsidizing news sites etc. - this is already a reality in nearly every public broadcasting company.

“The new media structure” is a rather imprecise notion – it includes the proliferation of television channels, transmitted via numerous platforms, terrestrial, satellite, cable and the Internet. It also includes the Internet structure as such, with all its millions of sites, blogs, communication networks, databases etc.

Prophecies as to the fates of traditional mass media in the face of this new media structure abound, but so far the old mass media major actors appear to keep a firm grip both on the political processes in which majorities of people participate and political actors. Whether this is the calm before the tempest remains to be seen, but the distinction between the real markets and the prospective horizons still determines structures.

In singular cases, and increasingly, the Internet seems to play a growing role – this has been the case specifically in the “new social movements” like Attac, or World Social Forum, as well as movements on the right-hand side of the political scene, but also, as noted, in the 2008 US election campaigns. Forecasts of a rapid change of control structures seem not to come true, though the extremely rapid development of weblogs might announce a revolutionary change. Internet seems rather to become a kind of everyday habit and infrastructure for workplaces and privately for those people who can afford computers. One might draw a parallel to telephones, where, in a global perspective, still a minority of the human beings of this world have access to a telephone of their own, although the prospects of about 4,5 billion people having a mobile phone seem to be rapidly developing.671 ...

Still the time available for every media user sets limits – reading blogs consumes your time as much as any other reading.

NEW TOOLS OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

THEORETICAL HALO: METAPHYSICS AND COMMUNICATION

In concluding this analysis of cultural production in relation to power and knowledge conditions, some rather heart-breaking swings will be made between metaphysical remarks and concrete suggestions for studies, likely to illuminate the road to a better political understanding of needs of action.

Let me return for a while to Habermasian language – or perhaps even abuse of Habermasian terms.

The notion of “communicative action” was coined by Habermas in a kind of cumulative magisterial response synthesizing a wealth of philosophical and sociological reflections. On the philosophical side one might discern inspiration from, at least, Kant, Karl Marx and Charles Sanders Peirce, as well as hermeneutics like Dilthey and Gadamer, but also incorporating ideas from Simmel, Cassirer, Husserl, Wittgenstein and his followers in the Oxford circle of philoso-

---

671 Listening to the Chief executive officer of Ericsson, Carl-Henric Svanberg, in the morning 26/4 2007 on Radio Sweden, business news 7.35, announcing the results of the group, and sketching its future.
phers, etc. etc. On the sociological side it is, again, Marx and the Frankfurt school, but perhaps first of all Talcott Parsons, with whom the entire work of Theory of Communicative Action may be seen as a dialogue. Also French philosophers, historians and anthropologists of the structuralist and post-structuralist tendencies (Foucault, Lévi-Strauss, and others) are included in the background to this immensely learned work. Later American pragmatists like Harry Frankfurt are other speaking partners for Habermas, as well as system theorists such as Niklas Luhmann and his predecessors von Bertalanffy and contemporaries like Prigogine.

Communication is traditionally something which might be interpreted in a “material” as well as a “spiritual” (mental, immaterial) fashion – the first interpretation having to do with transports of physical objects (including gases and fluids), the second one not moving physical objects but using physical matter to confer “messages” – or “meaning”. By and large communication in the latter understanding is dependent on artefacts in some very large sense – even if the artefact might be as subtle as a glimpse of an eye in an exchange of friendship, understanding or love. Artefacts must thus be interpreted in as much a dynamic sense, that is, events or processes, as objects in a more static or permanent understanding. But also those immaterial artefacts will also necessarily have to be “transported” in a very large sense: if only by light or sound matter...

The light has to make it possible for me to see the glimpse of the eye of the beloved, that is to transport it with a velocity of 300 000 km/second to me...

The attraction of the terminology of “communicative action” to Habermas is a metaphysical attraction: that is, to understand and enounce the widest possible categories of describing human experience. His ambition is to describe and understand human mind in terms of material entities, like movements, objects, events etc.

The counterpoint to this position, in traditional terms “idealism”, would focus on communication described in terms of immaterial objects, like universals, meanings, senses, “noemas”, “ideas”, “forms” etc. This “idealism” is usually (but not necessarily – cf. Hegelian “objective” idealism, and perhaps Heideggerian later philosophy of language) also combined with “subjectivism”, whereby meanings, messages etc. are rooted in, or in the last resort analyzed into, “Erlebnisse”, usually translated into “lived experiences” in English, that is, events only recordable in individual human beings, and, by definition, not contestable by other human beings. These “Erlebnisse” are usually, as from the “outbreak” of phenomenology at the end of the 19th C also classified as “intentional”, that is, directed towards some “object”, which is not identical with (or “in”) the mind of the subject having the intention. The difficulty to account for these intentional experiences without taking recourse to language or some other socially accepted or socially founded system of interpretation and enunciation has led to a “linguistic” turn also in the analysis of mind and experiences. The “linguistic turn” has later taken a “social” turn, for example in understanding language as a “form of life” (Wittgenstein) and by the introduction of a many-valued and many-layered analyses of language and other forms of meaningful action in semiotics, discourse analysis, micro-sociology etc. In this manner subjectivity and objectivity seem to join hands, just like materialism and idealism seem to do as regards artefacts: neither one seem to be able to do its work without the other. In classical philosophical terms a true dialectic seems to be established – which inevitably leads to the suspicion that the entire problem is a kind of internal game of concepts or words.

Now, the other part of the Habermasian central concept – “action” – enjoys, or suffers, the same fate. Action is usually understood as something “conscious” – in distinction to our “behaviour” or “instincts”, like eating, procreating, secretions, fighting, reacting or even less “unconscious” life-processes like breathing, digesting, circulation of blood and other liquids etc. We “mean” something by our actions. Intermediary stages between “action” and “behaviour” or simply including action in behaviour, might be distinguished, like dreaming, building up subconscious motivations or desires, which come to the “surface” in some kind of action or behaviour.

---

472 Habermas would probably not object to the label “materialist” although this term is certainly full of ambiguities.
Usually one ingredient in action in traditional analysis of human beings and conditions is “thinking” – in order to “act” you have to “think” – otherwise your behaviour is, merely, behaviour, just like the Pavlovian dogs.\footnote{Cf, however, again Arendt, who, inspired by Heidegger, tends to reserve “thinking” for a more reflected kind of mental activity.}

Whether “action” is an ultimate term within a defined discourse or system of analysis, might be disputed, but this actually seems to, in the last resort be a metaphysical choice. Is “thinking” “doing”? Or, in Austin’s\footnote{“How to do things with words”... As noted, Austin had predecessors in the phenomenological movement from about 1914.} terms: is “saying” “doing”?

The metaphysical choice made by Habermas, along with a number of others “pragmatizing” philosophers and social theorists, is clear: a recommendation to avoid reference to analyses which incorporate, or depend on, concepts that are not analyzable into physical or materially sounding terms like “action” – in particular “thinking” (cogitare, to go back to the origin of modern Western “subjectivism”, in Descartes).

In analyzing communicative action in a “materialist” vein, one is necessarily forced to inquire into the role of media in a very general sense. Only physical objects (processes, events) are capable of “transportation” of the artefacts formed as products of our initiatives of communicative action – the “messages”, understood as tokens, or exemplars, of meaning-carriers. A text (preferably in the extended sense proposed by Derrida, that is, also incorporating pictures, oral traditions, customs, in brief all traces of human action, or at least “intentional” behaviour – note the circle, vicious or not…) has to be “inscribed” in a “medium” – sound, sound-carrier, light or “light-carrier” (like paper, screens, pergament, stone, clay...). The medium in this basic sense is inevitably linked to a system of expression or a code – Linear B would not have been a problem if not for its enigmatic character, long resisting interpretation or deciphering. A well-known problem for all wartime experts in seeing the system in the code of the message.

The medium is thus, accordingly, not a medium if there is no “code” available – scribbles in the sand are “meaning-less” without a code.

A mental product (if purely mental products are accepted) – to return to our “Twardowskian” language – is not a mental product if it is not produced according to a code. Likewise a “psycho-physical” product is not a product, lacking a code, a kind of system of communication, and a medium suitable for the inscription of this kind of coded messages. Sound is just not usable for the inscription of pictures, or vice versa, otherwise neither the deaf nor the blind would have problems. There is some substitutability – there is sound to describe pictures, and tactile languages to replace audition for the deaf-blind etc. But one medium or other is required for communication, and generally, for any cultural production.

Now, medium in the narrower sense used in media studies, or cultural studies, in our current scholarly discourse, is definitely something more specific than air, sound, light, screens or the like.

To analyse the new tools for communicative action is not equal to analyse the “new media”, as briefly touched upon above. These new media are gradually being subject to new scholarly work, in thousands of media and cultural studies departments all over the world. Instead the objective here is to try to sketch some of the consequences of changes of cultural production which have been discussed above - consequences on the more “immaterial” level of cultural production – that is, forms of expression, habits, policies and discourses used, and possible in the changing environment of cultural production.

The ambiguous term “content” is a candidate for this “immaterial” level of communicative action – but in that case rather on an accumulated level – since rather the systems of production of content, specifically the aspect of control or power, are the primary focus of analysis, in its interplay with other elements of the structure. Measuring the political or ideological colourings or leanings of entire spaces of opinion is a much more difficult task – though not impossible, as suggested above.

16-Sep-09
Requirements of knowledge

Trying to discern new forms of communicative action, a first level is to identify shortcomings, in terms of lack of knowledge, which brings us back to the issues raised in the introductory parts of this study, issues which may be labelled epistemological, in both a philosophical and a sociological sense.

Identifying “black holes” of knowledge is related to what was metaphorically termed The Piper’s principle. Is it true that “he who pays the Piper calls the tune”? This question might be addressed both to the cultural producer and the structure (persons, companies, funding sources, owners etc.) surrounding her or him, as well as the structure of those examining this issue. It is a two-layered question, which is difficult to answer, precisely because also scholars are part of a cultural production structure, for a major part overlapping with the structure examined: publishing houses compete on markets with media in general, and furthermore scholars examining these structures are themselves, more or less, dependent on funding from actors in the same markets.

How do we proceed to advance our knowledge in order to arrive at an answer to this question? It should be clear by now that the answers provided will not be consensus answers. Taking this into account, the general attitude to be recommended might be the idea of pluralism in a broad sense – basically the sense outlined by Chantal Mouffe, as mentioned above. Her understanding might even, philosophically, be regarded as a Spinozian understanding: the universe, Nature or Being (or God! Deus sive Natura) has an infinite number of modes of existence, and accordingly also modes of being understood by intelligent (understanding) creatures. This attitude might also be traced back to Aristotle, who – in distinction to Plato – suggested that there are several ways of understanding the notion of “being”. Pursuing this kind of slightly anachronistic opposition one might label the Platonic attitude to being – and to the State! – as a unifying, integrating attitude (in quasi-mathematical symbolism: ∫), while the Aristotelian attitude was interpreted as rather a “communitarian”, pluralistic, differentiating (∆) one.

These two ways of understanding questions and answering them are, however, to a certain (not predetermined degree) understandable, and communicable, between various universes of discourses – a communication which I just tried to perform. The pluralistic attitude could not be taken to say that communication between individuals, acting and living within diverse systems of social and cultural contexts, and, in the final resort, all having individual life-worlds of their own is not feasible. This would be equal to denying communication as such – and amount to a paradox, just as Zeno’s paradoxes seemingly destroyed rational conceptions of movement. Finally, the interest is not to deny communication but to understand and interpret what might be meant by it, in a spirit of Spinozian tolerance, or pluralism.

In more concrete terms, two kinds of scholarly work might provide material for the understanding of the range and validity of the “Piper’s principle” in the field of cultural production.

1. Case studies

Studies on the ownership and control mechanisms are undertaken by institutions like commercial corporations, public bodies and organisations in civil society. Some studies are publicly available in databases and statistical material is regularly up-dated. These studies are in some cases continuously performed for individual major firms, but most of the interesting material is rather found in memories and biographic texts from journalists and editors of media outlets, cultural institutions and the like. This material is abundant in most countries...

---

475 Adjective used in Wikipedia article on Spinoza.
476 Another philosopher inspired by Spinoza is the Norwegian Arne Naess, who in his history of philosophy has taken a consistent pluralistic approach, and whose "Empirical Semantics" is inspired by the idea that the hierarchy of interpretation of linguistic expressions is a question of extreme tolerance and, indeed, pluralism – without in any way losing sight of concepts like "precision", "intentional depth" etc. Naess was devoting much of his life to alpinism, thus illustrating Wittgenstein’s idea that the sense of philosophy is "überblick".
477 Derrida might actually be taken to do so, though he is not likely to understand himself in such a radical manner.
of the Western world, but difficult to survey. The informal narrative account might actually provide nuances and variation in approaches better than ever so finely categorized “content analyses” or questionnaire-based studies of broader populations.

A case might be a model, or might not: this theoretical difficulty is valid for all kinds of social study. An example has to be “exemplary”, that is, valid for a number of cases. To prove this is normally not required if the notion of proof is taken to be a control of all cases – the requirement is to establish some sort of correspondence correlation, informally or in some cases, formally.

Case studies of individual media corporations or groups are increasingly performed, and frameworks for continuous follow-up of changes in ownership is being established, by way of scholarly efforts in universities and by way of networks like “Media Watch”. Cases of demonstrative, and undue, influence from ownership/control structure over content production are regularly published, though not – to my knowledge – systematically exposed, although this would seem rather feasible in the framework of a global Media Watch network. One major objective of a case-based information system should be to establish a thesaurus of questionable or clear-cut cases of pressures from owners or advertisers on media outlets. The model could be the collections of case law, produced by law courts such as the European Court of Human Rights. This is not to dispute the right of the owner/controller of a media outlet to put her or his imprint on the production – though a transparency of this imprint is a valuable asset for any researcher of cultural production outlets. A register of the political or ideological colouring of media (cultural production) owners or controllers would obviously be of great value to all kinds of study of the power over cultural production content. The implications and controversiality of such data have already been noted.

2. Surveys and broad global analyses

Analytic surveys will in most cases emanate from case studies, that is, from the academic community. The link between surveys of ownership and control on one hand and the content of political and ideological nature, is however more rare to be found. Again one has to go to more informal accounts, like Ben Bagdikian’s classical The Media Monopoly or Chomsky-Herman’s Manufacturing Consent and similar publications to find assertions of correspondence between owners’ views and interests and the content of their media outlets. Most publications on media concentration rather fall into this category of analyses.

By and large the system of “risk management” suggested above must, be constructed upon as rich as possible material of these two kinds, and the elaboration of retrieval and comparative systems derived from it.

It is, actually, a system under creation, in a networking manner. As such it is, to my mind, one of the factors in present-day media development, which inspires hope and some optimism – as a contrast to the rather pessimistic images given above. Any system of risk assessment in the “cultural production environment” will have to be based on the evaluation of the consequences of already occurred incidents or developments, where changes of ownership or control could be demonstrated to influence content production in a significant way – whether cases of concentration or disengagement. Some elements in the analyses will be, in the media sector:

Analyses of journalistic working conditions – the scarcity of employers or self-employed occupation in many countries, due to overproduction of cultural workers by educational institutions, but also reduced number of employers in many sectors, is another subject deserving deeper study.

New categories of gate-keepers in the content production chains have occurred, as consequences of technical changes, primarily digitization. But also the disappearance of gate-keepers should be noted – due to the same development.

478 Nearly every media outlet is eager to publish some part of its history, more or less panegyric, in its company marketing material. Prominent Swedish examples of editors’ recollections after leaving their posts are those by Bo Strömstedt, Herbert Tingsten and Olof Lagercrantz, all working for the Bonnier group major dailies.
*Professionalisation* and growing specialisation of various categories of cultural production workers is an aspect, which has been touched upon, from the point of view of its impact on the consequences of changing production structures.

*Education* of cultural workers, including journalists and other content producers, might be regarded as an aspect of professionalisation, since norms and standards, practices and ethical values are produced and homogenised via educational institutions – which are, gradually, in many countries, being included in general institutions of higher education – thus confronting standards of scholarly knowledge production systems, such as “scientific communism”, critical attitudes, with demands for independence towards business bosses, public authorities etc.
MEDIA STRUCTURE AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Participation and quality – pluralism and resources
In the above-mentioned Spinozian spirit two\textsuperscript{479} contrasting perspectives might be suggested to illustrate possible approaches to problems of pluralism in the cultural environment. The slogans used might, to a certain degree, crudely also represent the “Platonic” and the “Aristotelian” approaches, sketched above, to cultural policy, albeit in a democratic society, where liberal (or social) market economy is taken for granted, and state intervention normally is not granted in the media landscape, save for extreme necessities.

“Quality first!”
This – “Platonic” - slogan is taken to denote an attitude which is basically more open to changes due to market mechanisms, such as concentration, growth of media corporations resulting from consolidation and exploitation of scale and range advantages. Consolidation provides opportunities for launching, and risking, new and innovative product kinds, and for developing existing products (such as newspapers, television channels, web sites etc.) towards higher quality, by enrolling more competent staff, buying better material from the outside, and so forth. This argument is frequently, not to say always, presented in the case of fusions of media companies\textsuperscript{480}.

Pluralism will, in this view, be regarded as an aspect of quality: if a story is told without taking into account diverse perspectives, sources, views, etc. the story is simply of a lower quality. One argument for this view is proposed by Professor Hans Fredrik Dahl\textsuperscript{481}, from a historical point of view. Studying newspapers from earlier times, it is obvious, according to him, that the quality in terms of richness of sources consulted, reflection and formulation of stories etc. has grown considerably in most newsmakers. And, the reason for this is simple: the stronger economy of the newspapers today, naturally furthered by the lack of competition.

Also a kind of educational argument is brought forward: only strong media outlets (cultural producers) might run the risk of engaging specialists (and paying them) for their products. Thus the educational function of the media is best furthered by allowing corporations to grow, in principle unhampered by considerations of eliminating competition by weaker firms.

Furthermore – and in some contrast to the general attitude of economic liberalism underlying this view (which is obviously not a very “Platonic” attitude, historically speaking!) – intervention of the public authorities regains some legitimacy in this perspective. There is in principle no problem for the freedom of expression if the State takes responsibility for the production of some media outlets (or subsidizes the production of them) – provided it is done within the framework of a publication policy where independent experts are allowed to have their say. The State could thus sponsor advanced products for a large audience or readership on these terms – which are in principle equivalent to the policies of general education and support to scientific research, as well as cultural institutions. The principle of arms-length distance between

\textsuperscript{479} Evoked to me in a conversation with Mats Svegfors, earlier editor-in-chief of Sweden’s largest conservative daily, former chairman of the Swedish Association of Newspaper Editors (Tidningsutgivarna) – today Governor, “landshövding”, of one of Sweden’s provinces.

\textsuperscript{480} A recent case in Sweden is the purchase of provincial newspapers in Western Sweden by the dominant (monopoly) newspaper of Gothenburgh, as noted in. declarations by the executive manager of the group “Stampen” (for example in Sveriges Radio “Publicerat” April 28, 2007)

\textsuperscript{481} Oral argument in a seminar organised by the Swedish 1994 Press Committee. Dahl also contributed to a report from this committee.
owners/controllers and the producers is presupposed, naturally, in a democratic context. A corollary of this view might be that, in the event where there is a selection to be made between on one hand a number of, potentially irrelevant or deviant, views on a subject matter and a more careful and deep-going analysis, following one canonical model, the choice should be the latter.

This model accepts, to a certain degree, the judgement that some kind of segregation is inevitable in the sphere of cultural production. There will, accordingly, always be a need of an elite which is capable of acting as a spear-head of development in intellectual, artistic and scholarly contexts. Worries aired about the low participation in general elections (for example in the US and European Parliament elections) and passive attitudes fostered by the huge supply of entertainment in the media could be set aside if sufficient quality is found in some highly professional cultural products, for example media. In philosophical-logical terms this attitude might be labelled “realistic”, since it presupposes the existence of independent quality norms.

**“Pluralism first!”**

The opposite, or “Aristotelian”, view may be represented by, for example, the above-mentioned American media economist Edwin Baker. It may be expressed as a preference for “subjectivism” in a “Spinozian” vein, as follows. It might also, following the above use of the term “realism”, be classified as an “anti-realism”, since truths are regarded as intrinsically (perhaps also in a Wittgensteinian sense “internally”) related to methods of verification or proof.

Scientific and epistemological debates in later decades have by and large abandoned the idea that one single model of description, theoretical approach or method of investigation in any scholarly effort is beyond discussion and criticism from peers. The same approach should be, in a spirit of liberal competition between views, perspectives and discourses, applied to media policies. The idea of objective, unquestionable quality criteria for media production (cultural production) is not tenable. Instead the plurality of ideas should be encouraged, and maximal freedom of expressing these ideas sought. An undisputable notion of quality could therefore not govern public policies, whether on a legal or financial level. One has to accept that a wide range of diverging ideas should occur, and that, for example, academic or rhetoric judgements as to the presentation and content of media and other cultural products have to be secondary. States and other public authorities (the Society or “Commonwealth”) should therefore intervene, not to secure quality in the futile “objective” sense, but rather to promote diverging views, outlets and products.

This view is – just as the foregoing one – ambivalent between “liberal” and “collectivist/interventionist” approaches. It favours state intervention in order to bridle market dominance by individual actors, dominance emerging by virtue of market mechanisms.

It is, on the other hand, “liberal” in its general priority on competition between diverse independent actors in a market, even before “quality” as above. It might even be taken to be extremely liberal in its faith in the beneficial effects of this competition of ideas: “may the best ideas win” is a slogan valid for the cultural production field as well as general elections in a democratic society. The motto might also be formulated as: “Better two bad media outlets with diverging political outlooks than one good, mainstream”.

Obviously, sometimes this optimism for the market mechanisms in social and political life is not warranted – perhaps the best example is (as already cited) Hitler’s victories in general elections, resulting in his constitutionally granted accession to power in Germany in 1933.

In the field of cultural production this attitude may however prove less risky – simply because of the tension between the forces of concentration in business life and the rather risky undertaking of going into media business, which makes any extremist or anti-social product rather daring. The other side of the coin is of course that very “popular” (in terms of sales) media

---

482 In a specific, somewhat “Platonistic-idealistic” understanding, where the “real” existence of universal truths, independent of human proofs or action is accepted. This understanding of the terms “realism” vs. “anti-realism” is propounded by the British philosopher Michael Dummett as well as the Stockholm logicians Martin-Löf and Prawitz.
outlets are likely to acquire a higher prestige and perhaps a more important role in relation to more moderate “quality” products. Interventions from the public authorities or financial sources could, however, in a spirit of compromise take such factors into account, allowing market mechanisms to work in some sectors and intervening in other sectors where plurality seems to be under pressure.

One might also, however, integrate analytically the notion of quality – subsuming it under pluralism instead of the reverse relation, proposed in the first attitude above. Talking about a “participatory quality” of a media landscape as a whole, the existence of – admittedly – “lower-standard” products would then together safeguard a higher quality of production in a situation, a market or a media landscape.

A compromise view?

Actually the aspect of public intervention\(^{483}\) might be a manner of avoiding a clash between the two contrasting views. Public intervention might in fact be used both for the promotion of some quality outlets where this is judged desirable – whether for popular science, general cultural debates etc. – as is mostly the case in European public service broadcasting policies, but also for some individual printed media\(^ {484}\). Just as in the case of the other methods of promoting media/cultural production pluralism, the classical demarcations between “liberal”, “conservative” and “socialist” political attitudes are not self-evident.

Ingredients of all these classical political views might be merged into a rather rational compromise, allowing liberal preferences for competition, market freedom, and a faith in a free struggle between ideas to combine with conservative preferences for quality, respect for expert knowledge and tradition in academia as well as with socialist preferences for collective solutions, state interventions to bridle markets and opening up of alternatives for weaker groups to speak up.

Actually this seems to be the only valid “third way” to go in media and cultural policies….

Compromise action…

From the above-mentioned catalogue of approaches to promote pluralism in cultural production, specifically the media sector, some measures might be singled out, because of their, at least prima facie, rather simple appearance and of their character as compromises, that is, including both ideas from “liberal” and “collectivist” approaches.

One is the idea of progressive advertising taxes on media products. This idea links the priority given to market-driven production on one hand (=liberal!) to interventions by the state (=collectivist!), according to an approach of “frames of action” rather than detailed regulation (=liberal!).

Another, related idea is levying fees on expansion transactions by dominant actors in a market: The “Make-them-pay”-model.

The other side of this coin, indicated above, is the idea of consumer support for media or cultural products. This idea reflects the traditional conservative and liberal reluctance to state intervention except for certain selected areas on one hand, and to distribute subventions in a manner, which encourages private enterprise and new business establishments (as for example lunch restaurants). At the same time it reflects a collectivist will to regulate and steer markets by way of public interventions in economic terms. It might be compared with older practice in social

\(^{483}\) The traditional lukewarm attitude of social liberalism, or Social Democracy…

\(^{484}\) Governor Svegfors – now head of Radio Sweden - had a particular interest in the State research council and Academy of Science sponsored publication of “Dagens forskning” (Actual Research), which was a broad cultural-scientific magazine, planned to be published rather frequently. The sponsors, finally, did not succeed in keeping up sufficient levels of funding, and subscribers did not engage – so the publication had to be closed down. It was, in a sense, the closest attempt so far to launch a public service newspaper in Sweden, since its content was rather broad, though based on scholarly attitudes and results.
aid to give coupons for purchases of clothing etc. to the poor, coupons valid only in specific shops but still gave a certain liberty of choice to the persons receiving public aid.

These suggestions might have a rather simplistic and innocent character, and are, just like other interventions into an existing social or business system, liable to be criticized from the point of view of its lack of realism. And, naturally, modifications and adaptations are necessary – but still: as among others economy Nobel Prize winner Stiglitz has pointed out, some degree of social organisation or even engineering is just a prerequisite for a well-ordered market economy. The “free” market is, perhaps under a slight touch of paradox, intrinsically linked to (yes, one might even, philosophically, with Wittgenstein talk about an “internal relation”?) the existence of regulations, social order and trust between diverse groups in society. The roots of capitalism - and economic analysis itself - are in the extreme interventionist practice of mercantilism, as much as in the diligence and spirit of sacrifice of Protestant sects, as suggested by Weber.\footnote{Weber...}

Metaphorically, a market-place is, literally, a place, a square or an open area where there is some kind of order: each seller has his or her stand, space of selling, and you have to have passages between different stands, some kind of “überblick” for customers, who have to know where the dealers are usually placed – and some exchange of information is continuously taking place in the market-place. A dealer who does not respect the rules of the market will soon be out of business, lose his life-bread. And a customer who does not know the order of the market will have difficulties in finding what she wants or will be seriously cheated. Market presupposes order.

And social order is a creation of the human spirit – that is, a cultural product.

**ON THE FUTURE OF MIND**

Hannah Arendt’s last work is entitled “The Life of the Mind”. The leading thought in this work is the distinction between the mind as the “thinking” part of our inner life, and the “willing” aspect of mind. Thinking, to her, is basically the human activity, which is capable of taking a distance to appearances (sensing) and builds upon imagination, that is creating new figures from the appearances … Thinking is, thus basically, “speculative”, “mirroring”, not just in a passive sense reflecting …

Mind could be understood in a number of ways\footnote{Compact Oxford Dictionary, on line: Noun 1 the faculty of consciousness and thought. 2 a person’s intellect or memory. 3 a person identified with their intellectual faculties. 4 a person’s attention or will.}, each of them defensible, and mostly relying upon age-old metaphysical standpoints.

Mental activity is thus often thought to be something radically inaccessible to other people, unless expressed (which in some sense eliminates its rigidly mental character). Only I know my own “Erlebnisse” and nobody else could contest them. They are, strictly speaking, beyond, or before, truth and falsity.

On the other hand, mind is also, throughout the history of human reflection upon itself, understood as a collective entity, based upon the existence of communication, whether linguistic or in the form of discourses, formats, languages, artefacts, or other results of, or codes for, communicative action. This understanding of mind is fundamentally linked to values as truth, proof and falsity/falsification. Other people will have their say on the stories told by me.

No private language is, by definition, possible – according to Wittgenstein’s famous dictum – just as there is no pair without two members… or a coin with a value on Robinson’s island (before Friday’s arrival…).

Mental development, such as the assembling of new formats, discourses, languages, artefacts… configuring these formats etc. to one another is therefore, just as the changes in ordinary language takes place in a common “reign”, a reign where power rules, regulates, rectifies, corrects…
The technology of mind, such as the invention of new mathematical models, logical systems (most importantly the digital calculus and Turing models), but also the more “material” parts of this mental technology governing the new appearance of forms of media, cultural industries, and the like, is integrated in this reign of mind where rulers, princes, governments, corporations, societies, mafias, sports organisations, philanthropy and human aid movements, religions compete for power or cooperate. Law and order constitute aspects of cultural production – if it is difficult to see for your own “developed” Western society you just take a look at the society of the Trobrianders and you will see why this is a reasonable inclusion.  

Cultural /artistic creation is sometimes seen as the heart of those forces which are behind any development in society, not only “cultural” development in a more restricted sense, but also any development which leads humankind to greater efficiency and rationality in the use of natural resources, that is, behind what we call “technological” and material development.

This is what we might label an “idealistic” view of history, provided we restrict the notion of history to that part of the time-space which happens to be populated by those peculiar entities which are equipped with language, memories linked to and dependent on that language, and furthermore ways to preserve language in a more stable way than oral communication makes possible. In short: the classical definition of history (as distinct from archaeology, geology, development…) as that tiny slice of this time-space (of 4 billion years?) where writing occurs. Making things is important, but even more important is the capacity of telling others how to make them. And telling is easier, if you have papyrus, stones, or clay-boards to store symbols of spoken language, just as mathematics presupposes, above a very elementary level, facilities to preserve ideas in the shape of written numbers, graphic figures, or at least an abacus. This stage of development also presupposes the idea of “symbol” or representation: that similar carvings, traces of ink or whatever, are taken to be “tokens” of the same “type”. For if each line of a pen just was a picture, and not representing sound or other features of language we would be helpless in using signs. Or rather: the idea of “sign” as something different from “trace” in the ordinary animal world – that is the arbitrary sign, not the “natural” sign (where smoke is a sign of fire) – is what distinguishes history from “pre-history”. The borderline is not always clear, as is shown by the 30 000 years old enigmatic signs in the grotto frescos in France and elsewhere.

Recognition, memory, and arbitrariness of signs – as “-emic” or constructed “ideal” (immaterial) entities are three fundaments of Mind. Subjectivity, the human lived experiences and the immaterial objectivity of signs and other artefacts – at least one side of the Reign of Mind, may be seen as two sides of nature – taking Spinoza’s pluralistic approach again, blurring the borderline to “culture”. This may be forgiven, if “nature” is taken in the encompassing sense employed by Spinoza and other “pantheistic” thinkers, from many cultures.

The changes presently taking place in this reign are deeply influencing the possible variety of species of thought, models, discourses, understandings – that is, pluralism in the same reign. A systematic and unhampered reflection on these processes of change taking place around us, and “in” us, is a necessity. It should be repeated many times in the multitude of cultural production fields, where we live.

Indeed, it should be a continuous occupation, already expressed in the Delphi prescription: Know thyself.

---

487 It is not a matter of coincidence that Bourdieu is among the proponents of an enlarged concept of cultural production – he studied first the culture and values of Kabylia society (“anthropology” – the study of the culture of The Other) and then turned to studies of his “own” culture – and became a “sociologist”, and obviously the values and norms of French society to him occurred much the same kind of phenomena as those of the Berb society in Algeria.

488 A term borrowed from the linguistic scholarly practice since the turn of the last century – where “phoneme” is something “abstracted” or “typified” from the actual individual sounds of a particular language. The classical example is that the [r]-phoneme in many European languages might be given two quite different sound representations, like the standard French pronunciation, the English variety or the Italian one. Still most of these languages tolerate these varieties as representations of the “same sound”. In writing systems any user of modern computers is aware of the vast collection of choices of fonts for each letter of the alphabet.
References

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS AND LEGAL TEXTS

—, Recommendation R 199… On transparency
Konkurrensverkets rapport nr 2003:2. Konkurrens och samarbete i medierna. (Swedish Competition Authority Report Competition and cooperation in the media.)
Independent Study on Indicators for Media Pluralism in the Member States - towards a Risk-Based Approach
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media_taskforce/pluralism/study/index_en.htm
World Cultural Report.

ENCYCLOPAEDIC WORKS

Wikipedia English, French and Swedish.

MEDIA SOURCES


Rudbeck, Carl. Al Farabi’s dualism Axess, October 2006

Stallman, Richard. www.stallman.org

Websites Sept 22, 2006: Mondadori, Gruppo Express, La Repubblica.

Information Philosophie. Aug. 2006


World Internet Institute

North German Broadcasting service (NDR)

http://www1.ndr.de/ndr_pages_std/0,2570,OID280934,00.html Nov 2006.

OTHER


Albarran, Alan & Mierzejewska, Bozena. "Media Concentration in the US and the European Union", Paper to the 6th World Media Economics Conference, HEC Montréal 2004. (Electronic version) (Several other papers on media concentration, at the same site.)


Arbeau, Thoinot. Orchesography. New York: Dover 1967. (French original 1589)


Beckman, Svan. Little Culture and Big Culture. Forthcoming.


Bühler, Karl. Sprachtheorie. 1934.
—, ‘The Impact of Digitalisation on Television Content’. Report to the Council of Europe MM-SP-L (99)11.


Frenander, Anders. Kulturen som kulturpolitikens största problem. 2005


Lévy, Pierre. ”Nouvelle responsabilité des intellectuals”. In *Le Monde Diplomatique* August 2007.


—. "Copyleft vs. Copyright. A Marxist Critique". In *First Monday (electronic peer-reviewed journal)* Vol 7, Number 3 (March 2002).
   URL: http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue7_3/soderberg/index.html


—. *O czynnosciach i wytworach*. In *Wybrane pisma filozoficzne*, below. (On Actions and Products)
—. *O tak zwanych prawdach wzglednyc h.*. In *Wybrane pisma filozoficzne*, below. (On so called relative truths.)


