

ICA Pre-Conference 2018

# Articulating Voice. The Expressivity and Performativity of Media Practice

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Hilton, Prague, Czech Republic

Organizers: Christian Pentzold (University of Bremen), Kenzie Burchell (University of Toronto), Olivier Driessens (University of Copenhagen), Alice Mattoni (Scuola Normale Superiore), Cara Wallis (Texas A&M University)

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

*“Media matter most when they seem not to matter at all.” (Wendy Chun)*

But how can we understand the practices through which innovations in media and digital data move from being unexpected, novel, and impactful to the negotiated, embedded, and habitual?

The pre-conference takes issue with the mundane yet pervasive nature of media habits, rituals, and customs. It assesses the purchase of practice-based approaches in order to see under what conditions and with what consequences they enter studies in communication and media. In particular, we invite participants to consider the expressive and performative dimension of what people actually do and say in relation to media and to the wider communication ecologies in which these articulations take place. We are especially interested in contributions that examine how voices are expressed, represented, or muted and that study the ways practices of voice combine, overlap, or collide with other mediated activities in contemporary societies. With this, we strive for an explanation and critical appreciation of media practices whose accomplishment is a perennial exercise in which we find ourselves immersed.

## Conference Programme

<b>Time</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
8:30	<b>Opening by the Convenors</b> A Practice Turn in Studies of Communication and Media?
8:45	<b>Panel I: Off the Ground: Maintaining the Media-Suffused Everyday</b> Jesper Pagh, Fiona Huijie Zeng & Signe Sophus Lai, U of Copenhagen, Denmark: Show and Tell – Mapping communicative patterns in everyday life
9:00	Richard Davis, U of Essex Internet use as “just something I do, rather than something I thought about doing”: a study into the domestic practices of UK households, and the significance of habit and routine in online behaviour
9:15	Claus Toft-Nielsen, Aarhus U, Denmark & Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager, Aalborg U, Denmark: Voices of inclusion and exclusion – the intersection of practice theory and media studies
9:30	Paul Frosh, The Hebrew U of Jerusalem, Israel: Objects as Practice: The Case of the Screenshot
9:45	Peter Gentzel, U of Augsburg, Germany: The Forgotten Subject? Why subjectivity matters after practice and material turns
10:00	<b>Response:</b> Peter Lunt, U Leicester, UK
10:15	<b>Q+A</b>
10:30	Tea & Coffee Break
10:45	<b>Panel II: In the Air: Speaking Practice – Practice Speaking</b> Paddy Scannell, U of Michigan, USA: Voice(s) on air
11:00	Mark R Johnson, U of Alberta, Canada & Jamie Woodcock, U of Oxford, UK: Conversation, Discourse and Play: Interaction and Moderation in Twitch.tv Video Game Live Streaming
11:15	Margreth Lünenborg, Freie U Berlin, Germany & Christoph Raetzsch, Aarhus U, Denmark: From Public Sphere to Performative Publics: Developing Media Practice as an Analytic Model
11:30	Sahana Udupa, U of Munich, Germany: Enterprise as practice: Fun and aggression in online political discourse
11:45	Hanna Klien-Thomas, Oxford Brooks U, UK: Navigating cultural citizenship – Voice and address in transcultural media practices of young Trinidadian women
12:00	<b>Response:</b> Elizabeth Bird, U of Southern Florida, USA
12:15	<b>Q+A</b>
12:30	Lunch Break

13:00	<p><b>Panel III: On the Move: Advancing activism</b>  Alice Mattoni, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy:  The mutual anchoring of mundane-oriented and politics-oriented media practices in the construction of voice. The case of anti-corruption movement organizations in Southern Europe</p>
13:15	<p>Hilde C. Stephansen, U of Westminster, UK &amp; Emiliano Treré, U of Cardiff:  Theorizing citizen media practices: agency, power, and social change</p>
13:30	<p>Yoav Halperin, NYU, USA:  We Will Not Be Silenced: Algorithmically-Informed Activism and the Amplification of Political Voices on Social Media</p>
13:45	<p>Philipp Budka, U of Vienna, Austria:  Indigenous Articulations in the Digital Age: Reflections on Historical Developments, Activist Engagements and Mundane Practices</p>
14:00	<p>Yang Wang, National U of Singapore &amp; Sun Sun Lim, Singapore U of Technology and Design:  Transnational positionality in mediated communication: Digital asymmetries, contextual constraints and strategic negotiation</p>
14:15	<p><b>Response:</b>  Maria Bakardjieva, U of Calgary, Canada</p>
14:30	<p><b>Q+A</b></p>
14:45	<p>Tea &amp; Coffee Break</p>
15:00	<p><b>Panel IV: At a Distance: Reporting and Representing Media Life</b>  Steffen Moestrup, U of Copenhagen, Denmark:  The journalist as performance in a crossmedia landscape</p>
15:15	<p>Kenzie Burchell, U of Toronto, Canada:  Mapping Strategic Interference in Global Reporting Practices</p>
15:30	<p><b>Chaim Noy, U of Southern Florida, USA:</b>  <b>Paper voices and performativity in the digital age</b></p>
15:45	<p>Nina Grønlykke Møllerup &amp; Mette Mortensen, U of Copenhagen, Denmark:  The Contested Visibility of War: Actors on the Ground Taking and Distributing Images from the War in Syria</p>
16:00	<p>Christian Pentzold, U of Bremen, Germany &amp; Manuel Menke, U of Augsburg, Germany:  Social practices, communicative practices, discursive practices:  Formulating an analytical distinction</p>
16:15	<p><b>Response:</b>  Nick Couldry, LSE, UK</p>
16:30	<p><b>Q+A</b></p>
16:45	<p><b>Final Discussion by the Convenors:</b>  What are the future perspectives for a practice-based study of communication and media?</p>

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## Abstracts

### Panel 1: Off the Ground: Maintaining the Media-Suffused Everyday

**Jesper Pagh, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**  
**Fiona Huijie Zeng, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**  
**Signe Sophus Lai, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**

#### Show and Tell – Mapping communicative patterns in everyday life

Six months ago, we set out to conduct qualitative fieldwork in China, the US, and Denmark, following a tested and shared approach that allowed for comparability of media practices across culturally distinct contexts. This paper presents that particular methodological setup aimed at unravelling complicated, ubiquitously embedded, and mundane media uses and rituals as they occur in various everyday contexts. Finally, we discuss the challenges and rewards in approaching media practices through the mapping of individuals' communicative patterns.

Ethnographers focusing on digital technologies often define their research area by the level of online or offline integration (Garcia et al. 2009), delimit their scope by focusing on specific genres of (online) communication (such as social media: Miller et al. 2016), specific media (such as smartphones: Thorhauge and Lomborg 2016), or specific contexts (such as the home: Haddon 2016). Contrary to this, we focus on mapping cross-media, cross-platform and cross-context communications in order to follow the flow of the multifarious practices that make up a person's daily communication. As such, rather than looking at digital media in particular, online and offline contexts in isolation, or a single platform, we "follow the people" (Marcus 1995) and focus on the proliferation of ways in which people communicate one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many, many-to-one (Jensen and Helles 2017), and me-to-me.

The overall research question that the projects aim at answering is how social and cultural everyday contexts characterizing (Chinese, American, and Danish) people's everyday life relate to different I) patterns of communication and II) uses of the Internet (as one of many ways to communicate). However, a preliminary question that needs answering before the main question can be addressed, is how to get at the situated enactment of media practices – empirically as well as analytically?

The study takes the individual user as the unit of analysis in order to understand the meaning behind individual communication motives and needs. As such, we study intermediality (Jensen 2008) on the basis of the respondent and in close relation to actual communication purposes, networks, and contexts. The approach combines recurrent interviews with 24-hour media diaries in an iterative design. The diaries are configured to the individual respondents in the sense that the report type and medium is entirely up to them and contingent on their regular media use. Hence, reports could be in the form of text messages, screenshots, hand-written records, etc. Interviews and diaries intersect by anchoring findings from one in the other. The

diaries are time and context bound rather than reliant on memory (survey) or contextually detached (big data), while the interviews contextualize the diary data points and allow for the individual respondent to infer meaning from, make sense of, and co-interpret their communicative practices. As such, we invite participants to take part in the translation of their data into scholarly accounts. The purpose being to get at people's individual understandings of their media practices, or simply "what the devil they think they are up to" (Geertz 1983).

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## **Richard Davis, U of Essex, UK**

Internet use as "just something I do, rather than something I thought about doing": a study into the domestic practices of UK households, and the significance of habit and routine in online behaviour

With the increasingly wide range of digital media available to people in the UK, there is a more sophisticated and complex embedding within everyday domestic contexts. More seamless experiences are created, reworking space-time within the home, and significantly some behaviours and objects disappearing from conscious day-to-day life altogether. Concurrent to this is the need to reassert how time affects internet consumption in the context of participants' experiences of everyday life, of a temporal ordering of synchronized and sequential activities.

This was one aspect of my 2015 EPSRC and BT PhD multi-method qualitative study, 'Home is Where the Wi-Fi Connects Automatically', to explore the extent that consumption of internet media devices and their content, reaffirm the temporal ordering that previous broadcast media have been utilised to perform in the past, or if there is a reworking of spacetime created in domestic everyday life, of a 'post-broadcast' era.

More widely, it critically assessed a revised approach is needed to studying internet use and behaviour – we must recognise much is a ‘mundane’ activity, contextualised within wider everyday life, and that individuals own meaning and interpretations are needed to understand entrenched routines and patterns that many are now unaware of. Such questions as how we adapt and adopt internet technologies in everyday life, their shifting significance, and how we incorporate the content it mediates in our daily routines.

To this end, I developed a participant orientated, practice theory based method of the Diary-Interview, ensuring participants are central to generating data, but also meaning making and interpretation, carrying out a total of 60 depth interviews and 45 sets of diaries, tracking 15 individual’s everyday life over a year of fieldwork.

The significance of this research is that the study and method create a vivid sense of the complex mix of expanding integration, and cautious resistance towards today’s increasingly continuous forms of computer-based connectivity. It also demonstrates an approach that creates a workable practical method for practice theory to adopt and develop.

This paper will outline the importance of practice theory in enabling contextualisation, and how such a research approach illuminates deeper understandings of media consumption and behaviour by considering it as part of everyday life, practices and participant reflexivity. It elicits respondents to consider their own behaviours, and raise often lost significance, revealing that a number experience a strong normative association of their use of the internet. I will provide examples from the study specifically on the experience, organisation and consumption of time – of how people reflect upon what they do within the home, and its interrelationship with internet consumption.

This work ties together various aspects of everyday life behaviour, including Silverstone’s (1994) studies on television as consumption within the home; Couldry’s (2010; 2012) work on the need to consider media as part of wider practices that requires contextualisation of knowledge and action; and researchers who reflect upon how time is considered and perceived (Shove, 2009; Southerton, 2003; 2006; Trentmann, 2009).

**Claus Toft-Nielsen, Aarhus University, Denmark**

**Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager, Aalborg University, Denmark**

### Voices of inclusion and exclusion – the intersection of practice theory and media studies

Since the beginning of the millennium Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp (among others) have argued for the potentials of a new paradigm of media research, which comprehends media as practices and not as texts or structures of production. This paradigm intends to move beyond old disputes about media effects, and a constricted focus on audience practices. The objective of the paradigm is to study the whole range of practices, which surrounds media as well as the role of media in organizing other practices in the social world (Couldry, 2004, Couldry and Hepp, 2013). In other words, traditional media-centric research (e.g. conventional audience research, textual analysis and production analysis) no longer apprehends the complexity of social life in digitalized societies. Today, media users construct their media texts individually in an everyday cross-media setting and hence, media research has to be directed “into the study of the open-ended range of practices focused directly or indirectly at practices.” (Couldry, 2004: 117).

Hence, we need to leave the ‘mediacentrism’ behind and open our scope to look more broadly at contexts – and the role that media play within them (Drotner and Livingstone, 2008).

This article discusses practice-oriented methods within the frame of Media Studies. The theoretical onset is practice theory (Schatzki, 1996; Halkier & Jensen, 2008; Warde, 2005; Couldry, 2004; Reckwitz, 2002), and the ambition is to contribute to an ongoing discussion about how to study media use in a highly medialized and digitalized society (Couldry, 2004; Couldry and Hepp, 2013). Drawing on three complementary research projects, this article builds upon three large qualitative data sets and their findings (Krogager, 2012; Krogager, Leer, Povlsen and Pedersen, forthcoming 2018; Toft Nielsen, 2012). The first and the second project studies the intersection of media and food practices in the everyday lives of young people and builds on explorative interventions and co-productions in school settings (involving more than 120 participants). These projects draw on practice theory, gender studies and food studies. The third project is focused on everyday social contexts of gaming sessions among adult gamers and draws on gaming studies, gender studies and practice theory in order to map how gaming expertise is produced, negotiated and performed. As such, the article presents and merges two very different fields of study, which flow together to form a multi-layered understanding of the expressive and performative dimension of what people do and say in relation to media practices. Through this multimethodology (Brannen, 2005) we examine how positions of exclusion and inclusion are produced alongside and within different media practices, how certain voices are given privilege while others are being silenced through the amalgamation of media-related and non-media related practices (Hepp, 2012). Moreover, we want to discuss *how* to study the amalgamation of practices through alternative and practice-oriented methods. Thus, to encourage ‘a sociological practice turn’ within media studies, we need more empirical research illustrating how this can be done and what the outcomes of this may be.

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## Paul Frosh, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

### Objects as Practice: The Case of the Screenshot

The screenshot is the unglamorous drudge of digital culture. Unlike selfies, screenshots are largely neglected in public debate and scholarly research; yet they are everywhere put to work. Utterly ubiquitous as a method of quoting from digital media, usually *within* digital media (think of how we encounter Trump's incessant tweets), the screenshot continually escapes our attention as the focus and product of cultural practices, and as a representational form that draws upon and promotes a distinctive set of assumptions. These assumptions concern not just the status of the screenshot and its epistemic claims, but also the character of the reference worlds – both our private entanglements with our digital devices, and our involvement through them with social network platforms – that the screenshot discloses. The extent of our innocence about the screenshot's functioning, and of our unreflective habituation to the uses we make of it, do not bear comparison to the scepticism that we display with respect to other cultural activities and media forms: it is almost impossible to bring to mind a single case of public controversy over the 'truth' of a screenshot, even though, in key respects, screenshots are no less malleable, and no less ideological, than digital photographs. 'Media matter most when they seem not to matter at all' (Chun 2016): this is precisely the condition of the screenshot.

What can we learn about media practices from such an object? At least three things. The first concerns the screenshot's utility for *everyday documentation practices* and the 'know-show' evidentiary function they serve (Gitelman 2014). Notwithstanding claims that digital media are technically underpinned by 'real-time' software-generated 'performances' (Manovich 2013) and that digital culture is characterized by the 'death of fixity' (Levy 2001), the screenshot marks the continued centrality of practices for maintaining communicative and epistemic stability across diverse spaces, temporalities and technological systems – including platforms, such as Snapchat, designed to promote flux and undermine permanence. The second concerns the screenshot's character as a *remediated photograph*. Here remediation emerges as a technologically organized constellation of sensory, epistemic and discursive practices, rather than as the largely semiotic reconfiguration of earlier media in new media texts: screenshots are described by name as kinds of 'shot'; 'taking' them produces a mechanical (pre-digital) shutter sound; and smartphones automatically store screenshots in folders called 'photographs'. The third concerns the ontological implications of the screenshot's deployment in everyday documentary and neo-photographic practices as *a mode of witnessing*, especially of the social media messages and interfaces that appear on our screens. Just as the photograph implies the plenitude and mutability of physical existence beyond the image of the scene it captures, so the screenshot implies the plenitude and mutability of a digital lifeworld beyond the image of the screen it preserves. Practices thus produce the screenshot as a media object: but the object itself presents an ontological and phenomenological excess that should not be reduced to the practices it instantiates.

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## **Peter Gentzel, University of Augsburg, Germany**

### The Forgotten Subject? Why subjectivity matters after practice and material turns

This contribution examines the role of the subjectivity in practice theory (PT). It conceives an understanding of subjectivity as a necessity for critical analysis of media practices. The arguments are developed in three steps.

- (1) The initial hypothesis is that in many arguments around the practical turn (Schatzki et al., 2001) and the subsequent material turn (Bennet & Joyce, 2010) subjectivity is too often neglected or played off against objects (Latour 1993).
- (2) The second step therefore focus on PT epistemology (Wittgenstein, Heidegger; Bourdieu, Foucault) that is always centred around subjectivity. In that concept, also a number of contemporary considerations about technology and agency are developed.
- (3) Finally, it is outlined which dimensions of subjectivity the critical research on media practices in times of "deep mediatization" (Couldry & Hepp 2017) should grasp.

#### *ad 1*

Even though the field of PT is heterogeneous, a flat ontology (Schatzki 2001) as well as a contextual and relational research attitude (Schäfer 2016) can be identified as its common core. In particular, Schatzki's generic argumentation around the nexus of doings and sayings and Reckwitz's meta-theoretical decentralization of subjectivity are paradigmatic. Both argue against the rational, conscious and reflected subject and the positivistic paradigm of modern sciences. In this context, the importance of bodily knowledge and the materiality of objects and technology is emphasized. Many arguments that follow are developed only one-sided and at the expense of subjectivity. The empirical bias on reproduction and always already ordered fields of practices can be taken as indication of this thesis. Sometimes subjects and objects are even opposites - which is not only wrong but in terms of critical research dangerous.

#### *ad 2*

In contrast, the epistemological dimension of PT, especially the social philosophies of Wittgenstein and Heidegger (Schatzki 1996, Dreyfuss 1995, 2001), are centred around subjectivity. Heidegger's (2001 [1927]) critique on Cartesian dualism starts with the body as

well as scripts of doing things. Accordingly, subjects are within an environment of things familiar to us through uses (not physical characteristics). Subjects usually act routinely as "man" acts, and so they deal with artefacts. In his later works, Heidegger focuses on the understanding of the relationship between subject and object. The principle of reason ("everything has a reason") as essence of modern thinking (and research), as well as the dominance of technical doings ("the essence of technology is not technical"), are the central findings of his later analyses.

*ad 3*

Subjects and objects thus refer to each other. The integration of culture and technique, artefacts and technologies in the analysis of agency and media practice should therefore be mutually conceived. In addition, an understanding of subjectivity is required that is neither pure rationalistic and conscious nor limited to too flat analysis of networks. The subject of practices is also not solely the active recipient of Uses and Gratifications (Lazarsfeld et al., 1968) the opinion leader in two-step-flows (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) or the influencer of social media analysis. Subjects of media practices are not defined by entities like mental needs, countable social contacts or follower numbers. In addition, subjects of media practices and in waves of mediatization can't be described in terms of "identities" or generation cohorts. Rather, analyses are required that exert fundamental dimensions at the level of habitus (Bourdieu), dispositives (Foucault) or social character (Fromm).

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## Panel 2: In the Air: Speaking Practice – Practice Speaking

### **Paddy Scannell, University of Michigan, USA**

#### Voice(s) on air

Broadcast radio and television are technologies of talk. Their most fundamental impact of these key audio-visual technologies of talk has been to make it public in live-to-air transmission, and to historicize it via technologies of recording. But underpinning talk, its phenomenal infrastructure so to speak, is voice. Radio, the premier broadcast medium, consists of the sounds of music and talk—and underpinning both is the human voice as it speaks and sings.

Long established performative norms of singing-in-public were transformed by the novel situation of singing at the microphone. A new style of close-mike singing, aka crooning, developed in the 1930s which created a new interactive dynamic between singer, song and listeners. Voice was the expressive register of this communicative transformation. Two exemplary singers, whose performance and personality registered this change, were Kate Smith (USA) and Vera Lynn (UK).

The politics of voice were manifest, in pre-war British broadcasting, in a variety of ways. There was first the question of whose voices were entitled to be heard and whose were not. Working class voices were largely excluded. Women's voices were highly problematic (heard as too high-pitched, squeaky, and often bossy). Regional voices were all right for regional programs (channels), but not the dominant National Program whose hegemonic voices were those of educated middle, class males. They were also, overwhelmingly (southern) English—only rarely regional, Welsh, Scottish or Irish voices and still less all other simply 'foreign' voices.

Beyond the politics of broadcast voices is the question of the human voice as such. Voice is, in the first place, a fundamental existential (not a sociological or psychological) phenomenon. It is the expressive register of our individual being, our being with one another (our *mitsein*) and, most fundamentally, our common humanity. What we hear in the voice of others is, as Heidegger puts it so beautifully, 'the voice of the friend that every human being (*dasein*) bears within itself'.

Voice mediates the expressive, interactive character of talk. Talk and voice have always been, in a strict sense, pre-historic until they were historicized by recording technologies developed, in the first place by broadcasters for immediate practical purposes. But recording equipment is also a technology of record. The sound archives of national broadcasting institutions provide

historians today and in future with a new resource that is radically different from all written archives. For Derrida (and for me) ‘the recording of the voice is one of the most important phenomena of the 20th century’. What now is available for historiography is the testimony of the voices of the dead, brought to life once more by the press of a button or the click of a mouse. The resurrection of the dead is no longer deferred to the end of time and the Day of Judgement, but a commonplace everyday fact of life today. The past and present is now redeemed as a relationship between the living and the dead.

**Mark R. Johnson, University of Alberta, Canada**  
**Jamie Woodcock, University of Oxford, UK**

Conversation, Discourse and Play: Interaction and Moderation in Twitch.tv Video Game Live Streaming

*Twitch.tv* is the dominant market leader in the live-streaming (live online broadcast) of video game content, with over one hundred million regular viewers, two million regular broadcasts, several thousand broadcasters making their full-time incomes from the practice, and a market value of approximately one billion US dollars. As a major new form of media consumption, and one predicated on rapid and consistent communication between media producers and consumers (viewers), live-streaming and the actions of live-streamers are increasingly important to contemporary digital humanities. In this paper, we explore three central elements of the communication that takes place throughout video game streaming, and the importance of studying the interactions and performances between streamers and viewers on this platform.

Firstly, we consider the emotional affective labour that streamers carry out. This involves forms of digitally mediated outward countenance: being friendly to viewers, soliciting donations, building parasocial intimacy with spectators, or engaging through humour. We will explore each of these activities in turn, studying how streamers communicate with their viewers in these different forms, how they each contribute to the practice as a whole. As part of this section, we also offer a first examination of the extent to which these individuals broadcast as themselves, or as a “character”. This disjunction, we argue, is an essential element of self-branding in an (increasingly) over-crowded marketplace, and represents a fascinating new elements of digital media practice.

Secondly, we consider the work that “moderators” – those who assist live-streamers in keeping viewers in their channel behaving according to a streamer’s particular set of rules – carry out, and how moderators mediate between streamers and viewers. Moderators are tasked with removing questionable content that other viewers say, and develop a strong bond of association with live streamers. Some streamers understand their moderators as being “representatives” of their channel even when not in their channel, despite their labour and “representation” being entirely unpaid, leading us to consider new forms of unpaid work taking place. Live streamers also “reward” moderators with extra duties, which they appear keen to take on; this section of the talk will look to explain some of these interpersonal dynamics, and how communication between moderators and streamers becomes a mutually-rewarding, although only one-way profitable, dynamic.

Thirdly, we consider the impacts upon the social lives of streamers from the kind of regular, rapid, online communication and interaction with viewers that typifies Twitch and live streaming. We explore how the practice has helped alleviate social anxiety for many of its users, who find the communication with their viewers to be an effective mode of reducing stress, building lasting friendships and professional connections, and empowering them to meet people in their “real” lives as well.

Methodologically, this paper draws on interviews with over one hundred professional and aspiring-professional video game broadcasters, ranging in length from ten minutes to over an hour, as well as ethnographic observations from almost a dozen major international gaming events in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Poland, in the last two years.

**Margreth Lünenborg, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany**  
**Christoph Raetzsch, Aarhus Universitet, Denmark**

### From Public Sphere to Performative Publics: Developing Media Practice as an Analytic Model

As digital media of communication become embedded in quotidian social practices, the forms and structures of public discourse change. The traditional actors in the public sphere now increasingly confront networked publics (boyd 2011), where issues of public concern are equally articulated, contested and negotiated in often chaotic, performative, affective and dynamic ways. The hitherto privileged role of journalists to create publics is challenged as the structures of public discourse change fundamentally. Affiliations between actors across different communicative spaces and physical locations are today established in lateral and often ephemeral ways, which question the normative concept of a nationally bounded, discourse-oriented and universal public sphere. The historical and theoretical legacy of the concept of the public sphere makes it difficult to account for publics emerging outside established structures of public discourse. Although it is now common to identify publics by a hashtag (e.g., #metoo, #blacklivesmatter, #occupy), we are still challenged to acknowledge—analytically and theoretically—that publics may not be entities (in the sense of a fixed set of actors) but continuously emerge from an ongoing process between different actors becoming aware of each other.

Building on the work of Shove et al. in *Dynamics of Social Practice* (2012) and theories of performativity (Butler 2015, Fischer-Lichte & Wihstutz 2013, Warner 2002), we seek to investigate how personal practices of semi-public communication contribute to the emergence of new collective forms of articulation and circulation. We describe these collective forms as performative publics, highlighting that they are based on a transposition of everyday practices with media to contexts of public communication. We argue that an adequate understanding of ‘publicness’ depends on investigating the specific performativity of public articulations which are anchored in quotidian practices among different groups of actors. We conceive of performative publics as a social process among actors, where dispersed articulations become discernible as expressions of a common concern (Lünenborg & Raetzsch 2018). Spreading across a broad range of actors, networks and platforms, practices of collecting information,

networking and publishing now contribute to the formation of new publics between ‘structural layers’ in social networks (Bruns & Moe 2014) or in response to events below the radar of journalistic routines of selection (Maireder & Schlögl 2014). At the same time, personal interaction and “practices of reciprocity” in social media alter the ways users engage with and challenge journalistic content (Holton et al. 2015). From a nonmedia centric viewpoint based on practice theory, performative publics offer a theoretical framework for the emergence of publics that are inadequately addressed in classic theories of the public sphere. Through practice theory we can understand how negotiations allow different actors to participate and articulate themselves without necessarily becoming established as new collective actors. Theories of practice can be employed to explain not only the routines of social action but also how rupture can be conceptualized through the performativity of practice itself.

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## **Sahana Udupa, LMU Munich, Germany**

### Enterprise as practice: Fun and aggression in online political discourse

The sudden rise of online vitriol as a politically significant phenomenon in the last decade has taken communication scholars by surprise, prompting a rethinking of the euphoria of digital empowerment. Amid a veritable expansion of commentaries on “populism” and “nationalism”, studies have most commonly used the theoretical apparatuses of “propaganda”, “race” and “violence” to examine online aggression for political ideological work. Yet, most of what unfolds as online practice in everyday contexts neither folds neatly into propaganda as a coherently manufactured ideological formation nor experienced as an intentionally violent act of racism or sexism. A large part of what coalesces as online aggression is simply seen as fun and adventure. Furthermore, fun and satisfaction of “achievement” remain crucial for an experience of absolute autonomy among online users in ideological battles. Building on my ethnographic study of online Hindu nationalist volunteers in urban India, I bring to closer scrutiny the visceral aspects of fun, autonomy and aggression in online political discourse, to delineate ideological “enterprise” as a digitally enabled political practice. Online Hindu nationalist volunteers are a diffused group of highly motivated, English educated and techno savvy social media users, whose knowledge of online networks, at least as end users, is key to their political claims in the public discourse.

Ideological enterprise on online media, I suggest, is a particularly salient case to highlight the theoretical purchase of “media practice”. Most fruitfully, it allows us to examine the political significance of online media beyond the frames of “rational communication”, to rework, in this case, the Durkheimian concept of “collective effervescence” as “processes of group identification through collective aggression” (Verkaaik 2004) and Mbembe’s (2001) thesis of the “vulgar spectacle of power”.

## **Hanna Klien-Thomas, Oxford Brookes University, UK**

### Navigating cultural citizenship – Voice and address in transcultural media practices of young Trinidadian women

Due to the region’s early and forced integration into globalisation processes, the engagement with transnational flows of ideas and images has been a long-standing part of negotiating belonging in the Caribbean. In the multi-ethnic society of Trinidad, contemporary expressions of cultural citizenship thus strongly rely on transcultural media practices. Diversity is not only reflected in the pleasures of assembling and transforming media content, but also in constraints resulting from the necessity to address a multitude of immediate and imagined counterparts. For young women, the stakes are particularly high in these navigations between national, ethnic, religious and multiple forms of cultural belonging. Leading scholars of Caribbean Gender Studies have conceptualised strategies in the face of continuously shifting subject positions as ‘gender negotiations’ (Patricia Mohammed) and ‘gender navigations’ (Gabrielle J. Hosein). Based on the consolidation of these approaches with the

concept of ‘serious games’ (Sherry B. Ortner), this paper seeks to highlight how young Trinidadian women claim and push the boundaries of cultural citizenship by navigating images representing diverse, often contradicting experiences of womanhood.

With a focus on the appropriation of visual elements from Indian popular culture, the expressive and performative dimensions of young women’s voices articulated on the widely used social media platform Facebook are discussed. Their strategies of address are situated within complex power dynamics displayed on a site that has emerged as a significant part of the public sphere in the local context. Insights concerning these digital forms of expression are also related to larger fields of cultural practices including viewing habits in Hindi film reception, deep-mediatisation of religious events as well as Carnival-related media rituals. This approach demonstrates the importance of connecting on- and offline sites in ethnographic research for a practice-based understanding of how rapid changes due to digitalisation impact modes of expression. Thereby, key issues for theories of practice are explored: firstly, the complex relationship between actor and structure is tackled in the light of an arguably growing necessity for conscious choice in the context of globalisation; and secondly, the question of what constitutes media practices in highly saturated societies is framed by relating experiences of fieldwork to arguments in Couldry and Hobart’s debate on ‘Media as Practice’.

### Panel 3: On the Move: Advancing activism

#### **Alice Mattoni, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy**

The mutual anchoring of mundane-oriented and politics-oriented media practices in the construction of voice. The case of anti-corruption movement organizations in Southern Europe

Literature flourished in the past decade on media practices in the context of political participation and political mobilization. Bringing a media studies perspective in a dialogue with social movement studies, such literature casted light on the situated nature of the communication dimension in protest settings and highlighted the multiple ways in which media practices sustain the construction of voice within social movements. This paper draws on such literature with the aim of enriching it by analysing an unexplored aspect of media practices: the mutual process of ‘anchoring’ that link media practices to other social practices with regard to political participation and mobilization, with a specific reference to the construction of voice. The sedimentation of certain media practices within a social movement might shape, and hence anchor, how other social practices are performed. But the way in which activists carry on certain social practices related to mobilization also has the potential to inform how they relate to the media and employ them. Furthermore, mundane-oriented media practices linked to use of communication technologies in the daily life of activists might also anchor politics-oriented media practices linked to the use of communication technologies for the political work of activists. In this paper, I address this mutual constitutive process between mundane-oriented

and politically-oriented media practices looking at how activists, politicians and journalists active in anti-corruption movement organizations employ communication technologies in three countries - Italy, Greece and Spain – to gain voice in the public space during stages of latency.

Based on a cross-national comparative research design, the paper draws on and analyzes two datasets: 40 in-depths interviews with activists, politicians and journalists; 40 visual maps that represent the daily media practices of the interviewees constructed during the above-mentioned interviews. The integrated analysis of the two datasets casts light on two different processes that characterize the management of movement organizations' voices during stages of latency, when activists, politicians and journalists are not dealing with the peak of protests. First, a process of boundaries dissolution between mundane and politics-oriented media practices facilitated by the ubiquitous use of communication media that render more and more blurred the divisions between different times and spaces of activists, politicians and journalists' lives. Second, a process of boundaries reconstruction that activists, politicians and journalists perform through media practices that are politics-oriented while having effects also for mundane-oriented media practices. While the process of boundaries dissolution points to communication technologies as structural forces for voice management in social movements, the process of boundaries reconstruction highlight the agency that social movements have with regard to communication media in shaping their own patterns of voice management.

The paper shows the existence of these two processes in all the three countries under investigation, but it also unveil the differences of the mechanisms that sustain the processes of boundaries dissolution and boundaries reconstruction in Greece, Italy, and Spain. The cross-national approach on which the paper draws would therefore allow to also putting further some methodological reflections on how we can study media practices across different geopolitical settings.

**Hilde C. Stephansen, University of Westminster UK**  
**Emiliano Treré, Cardiff University, UK**

#### Theorizing citizen media practices: agency, power, and social change

This paper will focus specifically on citizen media practices – defined broadly to include practices related to activist, alternative and social movement media – as a specific category of media practice. While, arguably, many contemporary media practices are so embedded in everyday life as to be largely unreflexive, citizen media practices are informed by activists' understanding of their broader social context, and aim to effect social change by articulating the voices of marginalized groups and making visible alternative realities. It is therefore important to consider the specific challenges involved in theorizing such practices.

The 'turn' to practice in media research has been taken up enthusiastically by scholars of social movements and media activism, as a means of developing non-media-centric analyses of activists' media practices. This paper explores the utility of a media practice framework for understanding citizen media. Drawing on work-in-progress on the forthcoming edited volume *Citizen Media and Practice* (Stephansen & Treré, 2019, Routledge) we critically map out some key contemporary preoccupations and possible future theoretical directions in this field. After

first situating the ‘practice turn’ within the context of longer traditions of research on alternative and citizens’ media, and communication for social change, we then discuss efforts to further theorise media practices in the context of social movement research through dialogue with other key concepts. One strand of work has sought to develop a more comprehensive conceptual framework for studying social movements and media by integrating ‘media practice’ with the concepts of mediation, mediatization and media ecology. Another has used the media practice approach to rethink the concept of the public sphere, developing an understanding of publics as performatively constituted through media practices.

An ongoing preoccupation in this field concerns the dynamic between media practices and the technological affordances of media platforms. Given the current intensification of processes of datafication and growth of algorithmic power, this line of enquiry will only become more relevant and urgent. A key question is how (and to what extent) the media practice approach can help theorize agency and social change in this context. One promising approach, which entails articulating the media practice framework with scholarship on media democracy movements and data activism, involves expanding the notion of ‘media practices’ to include practices explicitly concerned with politicizing media technologies and infrastructures. However, several areas remain undertheorized, including the relationship between media practices and political economy. There is also a need for deeper debate about the theoretical underpinnings of ‘media practices’. Can the practice approach be considered a new paradigm, providing an overarching theoretical perspective on citizen media? Or is it more appropriately understood as a new conceptual/methodological lens, to be used pragmatically alongside other perspectives? Finally, in order to understand the role of citizen media in processes of social change, more focused empirical research is needed on the specificities of citizen media practices and their relationship to other social practices – particularly how they might ‘anchor’ other practices.

## **Yoav Halperin, New York University, USA**

### We Will Not Be Silenced: Algorithmically-Informed Activism and the Amplification of Political Voices on Social Media

In this talk I analyse the emergence of new forms of political activism on social media platforms, which centre on algorithmically-informed strategies for enhancing the online visibility and amplifying the voices of specific political groups. Drawing on examples from my ethnographic study of political interactions on Israeli Facebook, I argue that such strategic practices call for an expansion of the theoretical models that have hitherto guided much of the research on the politics of social media.

As shown in numerous cases—from the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring to the Black Lives Matter movement—social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter provide activists with invaluable tools for the consolidation and advancement of political struggles. In studying the intricate uses activists often make of online networks, scholars have focused on how politically engaged users employ social media channels to spread information, facilitate deliberation, expand their activist networks, and organize protest rallies out in the streets. Yet more recently, I argue, we have been witnessing the rise of a novel form of digitally-mediated activism that

differs from previous models. The proponents of this new type of online activism are less interested in facilitating debates or organizing protests. Instead, they focus their energies exclusively on bolstering the visible presence and amplifying the voices of their chosen political camp on social media. By employing strategies that are informed by their understanding of social media's algorithmic infrastructure and interface design, such activists work to artificially increase the online presence of the political publics they identify with, and thereby construct an affective environment that can embolden potential supporters.

My analysis of this new form of social media activism focuses on a case study of a secret Israeli Facebook group called "Strengthening the Left Online." Since its launch in 2016, the group's members have been engaging in online tactical manoeuvres that aim at making Facebook's algorithm increase the visibility of critical left-wing comments that appear on the pages of prominent right-wing politicians. In so doing, these online activists hope to establish the Left's dominance over the Israeli social media sphere, muffle right-wingers' voices, and invigorate the entire leftist camp. By drawing on interviews I conducted with the group's founders and on examples from its Facebook page, I discuss their online strategies and their understanding of both the uniqueness and usefulness of this form of activism.

In addition, I argue that the popularity of such practices demonstrates users' own understanding of the political significance of social media. More particularly, they show that users approach social media not only as a sphere that can facilitate deliberation or mobilization, but also as battleground where partisan groups struggle for amplifying their presence and drowning out rival voices. As such, an analysis of the presuppositions that lead users to devise such strategic maneuvers allows for an articulation of a new theoretical framework that can help shed light on a host of related online practices.

## **Philipp Budka, University of Vienna, Austria**

### Indigenous Articulations in the Digital Age: Reflections on Historical Developments, Activist Engagements and Mundane Practices

The relationship between indigenous people and digital media technologies is ambivalent and enthusiastic at the same time; reflecting individual experiences and expectations as well as collective sociocultural contexts and developments. Considering indigenous people's colonial history and colonization's continuing effects on indigenous communities, it is not surprising that many indigenous representatives are particularly concerned about issues of power, control, and ownership related to digital technologies and new ways of knowledge production, circulation, and representation (e.g., Ginsburg, 2008). There is a strong sense of sociopolitical activism and agency in indigenous people's collective engagements with digital media which are closely connected to the mediation of cultural identity, cultural articulation, social intervention, and self-determination. Early research therefore focused on aspects of collective activism and identity (re)construction (e.g., Landzelius, 2006). The Zapatista movement in Mexico, for instance, managed to co-create a transnational counter-public to circulate their call for indigenous rights (Pitman, 2007) and a diversity of indigenous communities utilized the Internet to establish forums of self-representation and networks of support (Forte, 2006).

But indigenous people's digital practices are also related to mundane necessities of everyday communication, social networking, family bonding, or self-expression. The increasing global ubiquity of networked and mobile digital technologies as well as (broadband) internet infrastructures contributed decisively to the rise of social media and digital platforms, also in indigenous communities. Consequently, an increasing body of research is directed towards individual forms of everyday media appropriation (e.g., Molyneaux et al., 2014). Facebook, for example, has become a key self-representational tool for Aboriginal people in Australia (Carlson, 2013) and young First Nation people in Northwestern Ontario's remote communities (Canada) have been establishing a diversity of social activities in the digital environment MyKnet.org (Budka, 2015). Even though MyKnet.org is not any longer the most popular digital platform for the region's indigenous people, this locally developed and controlled First Nation service demonstrates how users' loyalty and a sense of belonging can keep a non-commercial digital service alive, despite the increasing dominance of commercial social media.

This paper argues that to understand indigenous people's articulations of their own “digital realities”, the collective and the individual dimension need to be considered. While it remains important to study the sociopolitical activities of indigenous collectivities in relation to digital and social media (e.g., Dreher et al., 2015; Duarte & Vigil-Hayes, 2017), it is also necessary to consider and explore everyday mundane digital practices. By drawing on a literature review and by critically comparing case studies across different times, this paper aims to combine the collective activist dimension with the individual mundane dimension of indigenous engagements with digital media. In doing so, it focuses on digital practices related to indigenous articulations, the mediation of culture as well as the formation and negotiation of individual and collective identity. Such a practice approach allows for shifting the analytical focus from the use and consumption of digital media technologies to the practices which are integrating these technologies in everyday life, avoiding thus a mediacentric understanding of media.

**Yang Wang, National University of Singapore, Singapore**  
**Sun Sun Lim, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore**

Transnational positionality in mediated communication: Digital asymmetries, contextual constraints and strategic negotiation

In contemporary society, people are located in “media ecosystems” wherein a variety of old and new media devices coexist and complement each other to fulfil users' heterogeneous needs. For international migrants, the constant proliferation of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) provides them with a growing range of options to maintain long-distance intimacy with friends and family back home, as well as to foster new social ties with their host communities. However, due to the long-standing social and geographical inequalities within the transnational social field, migrants with access to different resources and human capital often find themselves experiencing mediated communication in very diverse fashions. In this context, digital asymmetries, characterized by gaps in routines and results of daily ICT use, are likely to emerge both among and within transnational households (Lim, 2016).

Drawing on participant observation with 40 Chinese migrant mothers in Singapore, this study seeks to map the topographies of digital asymmetries in their quotidian routines of mediated communication, and to identify the underlying factors behind these asymmetries that impose constraints on their articulation and negotiation of identities and relationships. In addition, the study also provides insights into the dynamic strategies developed and deployed by these mothers to mitigate various axes of digital asymmetries in accordance with their unique life conditions and limited resources. Theoretically guided by technology domestication theory (e.g., Berker, Hartmann, Punie, & Ward, 2006; Morley & Silverstone, 1990; Silverstone, Hirsch, & Morley, 1992) and the feminist theory of positionality (Alcoff, 2006), we view mediated communication of migrants through the nexus of structure and personal agency, which is situated in and shaped by existing social inequalities, but can also be transformed by proactive negotiation of individual users.

The visualized technique of ecomap (Hartman, 1995) is adapted according to the life situations of Chinese migrant mothers and their families to represent and analyse qualitative data collected from ethnographic fieldwork. The adapted ecomap model, titled ‘communication ecomap’, has been developed to represent the mediated communication routines of participants and to indicate the asymmetrical flow of information, emotions, and underlying threads of power. During the mapping process, four dimensions of digital asymmetries surfaced from transnational communication routines of participants, namely utilization asymmetry, competency asymmetry, expectation asymmetry and power asymmetry. Three categories of contextual constraints that brought about these asymmetries were also identified, which ranged from time-space constraints to relational constraints and cultural constraints.

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## Panel 4: At a Distance: Reporting and Representing Media Life

### **Steffen Moestrup, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**

#### The journalist as performance in a crossmedia landscape

My research critically investigates what we might term persona-driven journalism by analyzing how personas are created and maintained across different media. I consider persona-driven variations of journalism as performances and benefit from a transdisciplinary approach drawing on performance studies as well as journalism studies.

The research is based on a case study of five individual Danish journalists who all work in various media and formats. Many of the cases represent an overflow between journalism and the arts sphere as they often make use of artistic strategies such as staging, theatricalization and aesthetic approaches. Inspired by Richard Schechner's statement of the "performer not being himself but also not not being himself" (Schechner 1985), I make use on the notion of the 'persona' and draw on the works of Philip Auslander (2015) and P. David Marshall (2014, 2015) in my attempt to gain new knowledge on the performative aspects of journalism.

In my research, I have developed an analytical model that is useful when it comes to engaging with journalist personas. I draw on the work of performance studies scholar Diana Taylor and her differentiation between archive and repertoire which is a fruitful way to unpack the work of the cases across media and across media affordances. I suggest an application of five different concepts in the persona analysis – namely theatricality, body, spatiality, voice and personal narrative performance. When used in a totality analysis of selected parts of the journalist's oeuvre, it is possible to analytically engage with and discuss the persona manifestation and use across media and across time. My case study has exhibited a number of strategic persona practices such as mediated bodily presence, confessional reporting, alter ego approaches, voice multiplicity and innovative transformations of life spaces into media places.

### **Kenzie Burchell, University of Toronto, Canada**

#### Mapping Strategic Interference in Global Reporting Practices

A set of digitally-dependent tactics - militarized media strategies – are emerging in conflict zones to stifle and undermine the conditions for responsible news-gathering practices. The complexity of global crisis reporting involves sets of interdependencies: between geographies, communities and journalists, between flows of information that cross mediums and media outlets, and the contours of linguistically organized regional yet globally linked media systems. These constellations often obscure the practices central to the production of news. By adapting the practice-based approach (Schatzki 2001, Couldry 2004, Postill 2010) for the production

analysis of news content, the research reveals the interdependent chains of actions that link the performativity of witnessing and reporting practices to the layers of editorial decision-making practices where exclusion, inclusion, framing and dissemination of voices extends across different formats, platforms, and towards regional audiences.

This paper will respond to a very specific gap in existing journalism studies methodology while also presenting initial findings of a two-part SSHRC-funded research project (July 2017- July 2019). Databases of multilingual, multi-national (CAN E/F, UK, FR, RU) public service media (PSM) content have been compared and discursively analyzed to construct timelines of unfolding crisis events and the journalistic practices undertaken in response: from initial reporting and dissemination through newswires and PSM monitoring survives (Associated Press, Reuters-Thompson, Agence France Press E/F, BBC Monitoring, RIA Novosti, ITARR-TASS, and Sputnik), through to the in-house editorial decisions by multiple national media outlets which are mapped through the different degrees of coverage across PSB web-page, social media pages, and broadcasting formats (CBC, ICI-Canada, France 2, Rossiya 1 and BBC).

By focusing on the extreme conditions of war-reporting in Syria, this research seeks to locate the limitations of, and stressors upon, reporting and editorial practices within international Public Service and State Media. Inverting the 'media event' framework (Dayan & Katz, 1992; Katz & Liebes, 2007; Hepp & Couldry, 2010; Dayan, 2010) recasts those limitations as an emerging set of militarized media conditions for interfering with responsible news-gathering practices.

Among other political actors such as Russia in Sochi and Ukraine, and recent lone-wolf terrorists in Western metropolitan cities (Burchell 2014, 2017; Hutchings, Gillespie, Yablokov, Lvov, & Voss, 2015; Burchell, O'Loughlin, Gillespie, & McAvoy, 2015), the militaristic practices of ISIS in Syria are often media-oriented from the very outset. By kidnapping and executing journalists and aid workers while barring mobile phones among local populations, ISIS has successfully hampered the reporting of clear crisis narratives thereby obstructing processes of bearing witness to wider global publics (Peters, 2009; Ellis, 2009; Chouliaraki, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2006). While obstructing coverage, ISIS also contributes its own content to the media landscape, simultaneously accruing both political and 'media power' (Couldry, 2003). They are 'not merely producing videos; they are acting as competing media outlets' (Simon & Libby, 2015), which specifically employ a 'staging' of the militarized threat that they themselves pose in international news (Cottle, 2009). ISIS exploits the ideological constraints of Western media outlets through a mastery of the image-oriented quality of contemporary hybrid or 'diffused wars' (O'Loughlin, 2011).

These stifled reporting conditions disrupt the practices upon which the integrating effect of the classic national 'media event' relies, serving to: (1) limit opportunities for live mediated witnessing of acts occurring within ISIS controlled regions and (2) replace such opportunities with highly controlled and delayed media products (i.e., execution videos). Disseminated online, such spectacles destabilize the event-framing and agenda setting function of international Public Service Media, exploiting an already-fragmented audience fidelity to often nationally-aligned media narratives. Interference with traditional media representations is coupled with ISIS' self-sustained online presence for the potential radicalization of sympathetic

citizens – yet another disruptive spectacle for news coverage in the making. By focusing analysis on the disruption of news-gathering practices, this research seeks to reveal the emerging limits and digital-dependent contours of contemporary media power.

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## **Chaim Noy, University of South Florida, USA**

### Paper voices and performativity in the digital age

*“History is filled with debate and discussions and those conversations continue to be relevant today. Join in and lend your voice!” Museum Label, The National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, USA*

I approach the articulation of voice, or the notion of voice as a recognizable public articulation, by bringing two lines of theorizing and research, which do not converge often enough. On the one hand, research in media and communication studies, which focuses on the materialities, ecologies, and affordances of media, both ‘new’ and ‘old’. At stake are studies that hold a historical, institutional, and often critical perspective on shifting media ecologies and, relatedly, on the multimedial nature of human communication. On the other hand, is research on language in everyday life as pursued by sub-disciplines including discourse studies, critical discourse studies, and linguistic anthropology. The synergy of these lines of theorizing and research taps on the dual nature of the notion of recognizably articulated ‘voice’ – voice perceived as performing (‘doing’) subjectivity, identity, and even agency – as related both to the medium (McLuhan’s (1967) “the medium is the message”), yet also to the “message,” in a way that in turn sheds light on the medium (and vice versa).

I begin this empirically rich inquiry by discussing my extended research on participation and voice in museums, which are public institutions of mediation (Noy, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017). I look at paper as medium and how it is displayed in contemporary history and heritage museums, and how it is understood to be the bearer of historical voices. As the paper-as-medium I examine is always written on, what I study are in fact handwritten paper documents that carry and display voice, both material and discursively. I examine how such textual voices are displayed, and the changing technologies and designs of museum mediation through which handwritten documents achieve voice and performativity. I note that museums are through-and-through public institutions (Bennett, 1995. Specifically in the communicative way Habermas [1962/1989, 1984] conceptualized the idea of the deliberative public sphere), and that during the last couple of decades many have undergone far-reaching changes regarding the type of public sphere they offer, and how they seek to interact with their publics/audiences (in fact, with the understanding of the museum visit as interactional. See Katriel, 1997; Macdonald, 2006; Witcomb, 2006). As part of these changes, paper – and the ‘textual voices’ paper carries – are increasingly more digitized and virtualized. As a result, there are less and less material ‘discoursal artefacts’ on display, and more and more digital installations where voice is mediated ephemerally. I will discuss a few such examples, addressing both historical artifacts (that convey ‘historical voices’ in museums) and the voices of the visitors, who are invited to articulate their voice as part of their visit (see epigraph).

With these observations in mind, I leave the grounds and confines of museums to examine the articulation of voice in digital environments. I analyze a few instances where voice-bearing handwritten texts circulate in memes and the twittersphere, as I ask how voice is designed, articulated and displayed in hybrid inter- and multimedial assemblages, and it is mediated in and through paper documents, and in what communicative functions it serves. Initial findings suggest that since handwriting is embodied (like human vocal voice) it crucially indexes authenticity, which holds a special merit (Benjamin's aura) especially in digital spheres. Also, as texts are visual, they are easily and fruitfully absorbed and re-entextualized into highly visual digital cultures of circulation and display.

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**Nina Grønlykke Mollerup, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**  
**Mette Mortensen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**

### The Contested Visibility of War: Actors on the Ground Taking and Distributing Images from the War in Syria

This paper studies how local actors-on-the-ground taking and sharing images from war zones manoeuvre the possibilities and constraints of the globalized and convergent, but also censored

and unsafe communicative circuit. In the context of totalitarian regimes waging war, voice is invariably contested by censorship, propaganda, access (or lack thereof) to communicative resources and severe security risks. Actors on the ground in the Syrian War documenting the suffering of the civilian population have to navigate in these circumstances of local strictures to media freedom. At the same time, in their attempts to gain voice and visibility with international publics, they are also restricted by Western media logics and norms for representing humanitarian catastrophe in terms of ‘tolerable’ levels of violence as well as simple and symbolically condensed images.

Theoretically, the paper draws on and contributes to research literature on mediated visibility of conflicts (e.g. Thompson 2005, Mirzoeff 2011, Blaagaard, Mortensen & Neumayer 2017) as well as humanitarian photography mobilized across media platforms (e.g. Harimann & Lucaites 2016, Allan & Dencik 2017, Chouliaraki 2017). The paper takes its empirical point of departure in the case of the ‘iconic’ image from 2016 of Omran Daqneesh, the four-year old Syrian boy, who was depicted with a bloodied face in an ambulance after he was injured in an airstrike in Aleppo. In order to study the interplay between the at once conflictual and productive media-related practices surrounding this image, this paper interrogates the tensions of global connections through the notion of ‘friction’, which Tsing (2008) has described as ‘zones of awkward engagement, where words mean something different across a divide even as people agree to speak’ (p. xi). The analysis builds on interviews with central actors involved in the production and initial dissemination of this image, i.e., local photographers, Aleppo Media Center, NGOs, Press Agencies, and mainstream news media as well as digital ethnography.

**Christian Pentzold, University of Bremen, Germany**  
**Manuel Menke, University of Augsburg, Germany**

Social practices, communicative practices, discursive practices: Formulating an analytical distinction

Theories of practice underscore the expressive performance of activities. That is, social practices presuppose their sensible enactment, which informs processes of understanding that are often nondeclarative. Starting from this fundamental idea, our talk will think through what it means to treat social practices as meaningful indexical activities no matter whether they are verbal utterances or wordless movements of the body. We argue that in order to be recognized and appreciated as a kind of practice, expressive acts have to unleash forms of cultural signification through which they are actually made socially intelligible. This is why Giddens (1979) concludes that “there are no signifying practices; signification should rather be understood as an integral element of social practices in general” (p. 39).

In order to conceptualize such an idea, we introduce an analytical distinction. It seeks to characterize and appreciate social practices, communicative practices, and discursive practices. With that, our contribution resonates with the overall program of the pre-conference which centres on the ways, forms of voicing are accomplished, and which assumes that practices are both, ‘doings and sayings’ (Schatzki, 1996).

We pose that communicative practices are a specific subset in the wider array of social practice. In their basic form, they can be seen, following Luckmann (2009), as socially rooted modes of sign use that help us to address recurrent tasks of comprehension, message transfer, and sensemaking. Hence, routine patterns of job interviews, news broadcasts, greetings, or ordering in a restaurant are communicative practices because they help people to attune and coordinate their states of knowledge, their affects, and actions. This happens in direct face-to-face exchange but also involves all kinds of mediated messages that orchestrate different semiotic codes, from verbal messages to multimodal audio and visual displays. Communicative practices can be described, Günthner and Knoblauch (1995) argue, with respect to features of their ‘internal’ format and features of their ‘external’ realization. The first set of elements allows us to distinguish communicative genres that are marked by particular varieties of signs, stylistic registers, and temporal or spatial constellations, for instance, in terms of synchronous or asynchronous exchange as well as proximate or distant contact. The second set points us to the situation wherein a communicative practice takes place and it, in turn, helps to constitute it. Situations are marked by levels of publicness, privacy, reciprocity, and acquaintance as well as by other parameters like the duration, preservation, or formality of the communications.

Discursive practice, in turn, can be viewed as practices of representation. In their epistemic potency, they help to constitute social life. That way, representation does not rest on a duplication of an already existing reality but rather forms the discursive generation of a representation with a claim to reality. Discursive practices thus allow us to reformulate the received separation into areas of the discursive and the non-discursive as an analytical category not an essentialistic quality. Furthermore, introducing this analytical distinction allows us to critically examine media ecologies, i.e. media-related communicative genres and situations, for their potential to enable or hinder discursive practices and thus to contribute to the nexus of voices that are (not) represented in mediated “discursive fields of plurality” (Feindt et al., 2014).