

English Abstracts

Ralph Weiß: Political-Communicative Milieus. Necessity and Need of a Milieu Theoretical Analysis of Political Communication (Politisch-kommunikative Milieus. Notwendigkeit und Nutzen einer milieutheoretischen Analyse politischer Kommunikation), pp. 3-22

Socio-economic resources and forms of everyday life crucially affect if, and in which way, mediated political communication influences political ideas, attitudes and actions. Communication studies and political science or political sociology respectively are concerned with this correlation. Can the theory of social milieus help adequately take into account this formative lifeworld context? The article at hand outlines how communications research on political communication reveals the significance of lifestyle dimensions. A complementary overview of how political science, or more specifically, political sociology, characterises socio-structural dimensions of life conditions as relevant for political attitudes and actions follows. Finally, the milieu term is presented as a conceptual reference, in order to unite approaches from both disciplinary perspectives. It characterises the way in which forms of political communication and modi of political participation are intertwined and from which lifeworld fabric these connections accrue.

Keywords: Political communication, political milieus, politicised social structure, political participation

Michael Meyen: Medialisation (Medialisierung), pp. 23-38

This paper reviews and systemizes literature with a focus on medialisation. It suggests a framework in which empirical studies can flourish. It proposes to understand medialisation as reactions of different subareas in society. These reactions can be related to structural changes in the media system or to the generally growing importance of medially mediated public communication. This definition carries consequences for empirical implementation. Firstly, longitudinal studies that ask not only for media logic and for its possible changes but also consider media content as well as (individual and collective) media agents and the factors that influence their reaction are needed. Secondly, studies on various levels and within various societal subareas are required to detect and differentiate medialisation. This is based on the assumption that there will be changes in the behaviour and everyday life of humans, as well as changes in organisations, institutions, and systems, due to the fact that these agents expect mass media to have effects.

Keywords: medialisation, media effects, social change, media logic

Ines Engelmann: The Media Discourse about Eastward Enlargement of the EU. Broadsheets and the Europeanization of the Public Sphere in Germany (Der mediale Diskurs über die EU-Osterweiterung. Europäisierung der deutschen Medienöffentlichkeit am Beispiel zweier Qualitätszeitungen), pp 39-55

To examine the constitution of a European public sphere in Germany, an argument analysis of news coverage related to the accession of Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania to the EU was conducted using two German broadsheets 'Die Welt' and 'Frankfurter Rundschau'. The examination of the media discourse in both newspapers is based on the conceptualisation of Europeanization as a process-related, gradual,

and multidimensional construct and therefore a model of the public sphere that integrates various different levels of information within the media discourse about EU enlargement. Apart from less highbrow discourse levels like ‘transparency’, the analysis focuses on more demanding levels of discourse like ‘transnational interaction’ and ‘discursive quality’. The results of the analysis confirm a higher level of ‘transparency’ and ‘transnational interaction’ at the second date of accession to the EU in 2007 in comparison to the first one. In addition, there is evidence of ideologically segmented public spheres in Germany as the broadsheets differ in their interpretation of issues relating to the EU accession.

Keywords: Europeanization; German public sphere, analysis of arguments, Eastward enlargement of the EU, EU accession, press coverage

Jens Tenscher / Sonja Schmid: First- and Second-rate Campaign Coverage: A Content Analytical Comparison of the Regional Press on the Occasion of the German General Election 2005 and the State Elections 2006 (Berichterstattung nach Wahl. Eine vergleichende Analyse von Bundes- und Landtagswahlkämpfen in der Regionalpresse), pp. 56-77

Due to some far-reaching transformations in the socio-cultural and media environment of politics the way in which election campaigns have been conducted has changed significantly. In addition campaign coverage itself has changed noticeably in recent years. While such transformations and characteristic of campaign communications have been part of several longitudinal and cross-national content analyses dealing with German politics on a national level, the sub-national context has so far widely been ignored. However, a widespread indifference among citizens concerning regional politics and a rising unwillingness to take part in state elections, point at some deficits in the way campaigns are executed, covered, and observed in sub-national contexts. To test this assumption, a content analysis of election coverage in regional newspapers during the general election 2005 and the subsequent state elections of spring 2006 was carried out. The direct comparison brings empirical evidence to general characteristics of campaign coverage that are independent from specific political levels. Yet there are even more striking specifics in state-election coverage resulting from institutional and process-related settings. These variations in campaign communications require further level-specific political communications research.

Keywords: Political communication, election campaign coverage, campaign communications, state elections, regional states, print media, press coverage, content analysis