

Date: December 2003

Title: Future Studies in Communications: Facing cultural diversity under globalizing conditions - a theoretical framework for a communication science on social crises

Location: Conference „Cultural Divesrity: Global Communication and Local Interaction“, St. John’s University Bangkok

Paper by Univ. Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer

Future is a category of communication. It is a dimension of the discourses by which the society organizes the appropriation of sense. In that sense future mindedness is a dimension of cultural worlds It is always a meaning goal of organizations. The rationality of communication is to become prepared for surprises. The meaning of surprise is culturally different.

I. Culture and Communication: two sides of one coin

1. The culturologic framework of Communication Studies
2. Communication: the acting connection of producing meaning by social practice
3. Communication of difference and distribution of sociality
4. Culture: The collective of symbols and signs – produced, realized and verified / structured and changed by communication – which is taken as the societal framework (space, time and relations) and reference of borderline (inclusion/exclusion)
5. Culture as a media-pool of communication: culture is the system of meanings, which are shared by and for communication
6. Power: the social organization of discourse establishes systems of order (domination and subordination)
7. Everyday Communication: unconscious affirmation of dominating cultural orders (second hand meaning)

II. Change of paradigms in communication science

1. from communication science to communication studies:
The subject of communication science is not communication as an object (cognitivism/behaviourism) - but how the society considers/observes communication (reflexiv-constructiv perspective)
2. from analyzing communication to understanding communication phenomena (interpretative paradigm)
3. from structure-view of communication to culture-view of society (cultural studies, discourse analysis)
4. cultural turn: from social science to culturalogical science of communications (new conceptualisation of social theory as grounded theory)

III. Communication Studies as Culture Studies (Contextual Communicology)

1. on the level of epistemology:

constructivistic knowledge-sociology (critiques of theory of reflection) scientific theories are symbolic orders, they produce meanings

2. on the level of methodology:

from quantitative methods to qualitative methods. The symbolic structure of social world demands interpretative methods – not only consideration or observation, but understanding of sense

3. on the level of social theory:

the attention goes:

- to the cultural constitution of social milieus, their models of creating and generating meanings,

- to the question of how models of sense are generated
social interaction: the social world
(relational contexts) is constituted by symbolic orders, by collective
models of meanings: sense is not a
norm or a purpose to do something, but is
creating and sharing meanings – they make the
world meaningful
4. on the level of research interests:
new questions relate to three streams.

IV. Streams as Versions of the cultural turn

1. practice-paradigm:
in the centre of research is the assumption, that
there is a special relation between social
practice and collective schemes of knowledge
and interpretation (knowledge as a category of
practice, not of truth – based on
phenomenology, , structuralism, language
philosophy L. Wittgenstein) – future is a sense-
producing dimension of social practice
2. autopsies-paradigm:
cognitive systems create an observer-related
reality by applying meanings (sense) to
environmental stimuli.
(the radical constructivism does not create a
theory of acting, but a theory of cognition -
construction of cognitive systems) - future is
a resource of self reproduction of systems
3. text-paradigm:
the social-cultural world are connections
(system) of symbols /signs, which reproduce
themselves in discourses. The socio-cultural world
appears as a text, as an symbolic order, which do not
depict connections, but which create objectives and
connections. – future is an implication of encoding and
decoding practice

V. Cross-over Topics for future studies in communications : fields of acting as future-oriented communication systems – examples of cultural diversity, global communication – local interaction

1. the blending of communication and media professions: journalism, public relations, content management
2. health communication: communication as a factor of system effectively, personal welfare, self responsibility, compliance
3. environmental discourse: environmental consciousness as a construction of sustainable sense
4. intercultural and interregional dialogue: conflict as a dispositive of communication (communification of difference (distribution of sociability))

Remarks:

Bauer, Thomas A. (2000): Zukunft der Kommunikationswissenschaft – Kommunikationswissenschaft der Zukunft. In: Medien Journal 2/2000, 47 – 58

Bauer, Thomas A.: Vom Kulturblick zum Strukturblick. Entwürfe zu einem Blende Theory-Modell. In: Karmasin, Matthias / Winter, Carsten (eds.): Kulturwissenschaft als Kommunikationswissenschaft. Projekte, probleme und Perspektiven, 127 - 167

Reckwitz, Andreas (1999): Praxis – Autopoiesis – text. Drei versionen des Cultural Turn in der Sozialtheorie. In: Reckwitz, Andreas / Sievert, Holger: Interpretation, Konstruktion, Kultur. Opladen (Westd. Vlg)