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Title: Innovation and Change in Journalism - Reflection on key-competences for media- and communication professions in the framework of higher education in Austria

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In modern communication societies public communication takes an important position determining social events. Communication society and industrial society overlap and are stressed differently. Intensifications in social communication go along with changes and innovations in information technologies, which are shaping and forming social life and social relationship.

The traditional communication professions – journalism above all – are in this context highly challenged to change. But to where – and to what?

Journalism in Austria has always been a free profession. That means also: The accessibility to journalistic profession always has been free. There is no obligation for any journalist for professional training or education. But, of course, the market regulates the system, which becomes more complicated in a media landscape, where public (semi-commercial) media are in competition with full-commercial or private (non-profit-organized) media.

FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS:

Societal Transformation Development: The Information-, Media-, and Communication Society

- is mainly based on knowledge (Knowledge is the resource of modern society, it structures complexity. Knowledge becomes constitutive not merely for modern economy and its productive processes, but also for social relation, social cohesion and integration (N. Stehr)
- organizes its goals increasingly by technology.
- but still in a social order of industrial society
- works with information as raw material in production and processing
- drives the economic and social development by competition of attention (virtual currency)
- gives open access to information, knowledge
- does not refer any longer to borders of countries, nations or languages
- uses communication and mediation as resources of innovation and change
- turns the working place to a place of information and communication management
- turns many traditional professions to communicative ones.

Media Transformation Development: Media as an agency-system of public discourse

- media are not any longer transport-system between politics and public (power-paradigms of democratic media function: socialized use of media),
- they are a reference system of symbolic interaction in order to construct reality (from a distant observation to direct participation)
- they are in service of discourse for all societal actors (responsibility-paradigm: social use of media),
- politics becomes more and more a system of symbolic acting – that is the reason, why the media- performance/presentation of politics is as much relevant as the political content,
- the work of media is enterprising public communication. The power of media is not by institution, but by market-position,
- the media- functions (actuality, periodability, publicity) have to be completed by discoursability

Journalism Transformation Development: The End of a Traditional Media- and Communication Professions

- the structural change of media changes the work with/by media: journalism is in a transitional state (monopoly loss of established media / the web-communication mixes up the entities, crosses media- limits and creates journalistic synergies between print-, broadcast- and online media (S. Weischenberg)
- the web-media rise a new division of social and societal roles in using communication media and make claims of authority, power and influence unnecessary or even impossible , as long as they are legitimized just by a role-position
- the work of journalism is not any more (just) the authority of information, critics, control – it changes to a management of pr-communications in critical reference to the interests of the audiences (target groups)
- Journalism is no longer a profession by its special knowledge of procedures, but by its special competences (ethics, attitude, communication competence)
- is no longer specializable by its special skills, but by its competences and research strategies of recognizing complexes of problems or risks. The problems are defining the work and not the work the problems
- are in a structural change: There are many and even more fields of activity, but unclear professions
- may be replaced more and more by professional projects in communication management and consulting - telemetric.

TRANSFORMATION OF COMPETENCES

The Structural Change and the Transformation of the Media Systems demands new Media- and Communication Competences

- technical competence (knowledge, professionalism, capacity, user-skills)

- cultural competence (ethics, responsibility, reliability, advanced attitudes)
- reflexive competence (understanding media, realizing and analysis of communications complexes)
- personal competence (authenticity, awareness, rationality of use, social orientation of personal acting, self management in complex situations, expression of personality)
- motivational competence (creativity, self-realizing, ideability, openness to innovation, change management).

Key Competencies for Media- and Communication Work in a well organized and managed Social Systems should be:

- Communication as a cultural. Personal and motivational competence.
- Communication is (besides fantasy) the only resource of surprise and of making difference
- Team- and Cooperation attitudes in heterarchical systems
- Strategies of search (information mining)
- Conceptualization of multi-referential projects
- Multi- or trans-cultural orientation in analysing problems
- Cultural understanding of work (constructing meanings)

Problems of educational mediation and development still are:

- How to teach and learn communicative competencies within academically rational, highly formalized, and knowledge-oriented schedules?
- How to deliver communication knowledge to many different segments within the educational systems?
- How to integrate practice as a field of learning and how to integrate learning also a part of profession?

Criteria of a sustainable education of communication professions:

In order to design the educational activities of the universities in media and communication professions to meet the principle of sustainability (relevance for future, creativity, deepness and validity of quality,) it needs a conscious orientation of professional profiles on cultural theories of social communication. That includes:

- an extended understanding of what is media (social context)
- a cultural perspective of communication acting (creating meaning)
- an open and at the same time integrative picture of the journalistic competence (discourse management / mediating communication flows)
- a constructivistic understanding of learning (communication learning is the personal exercise to become open minded for the difference. Which is constitutive for reality.
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