Abstract

**Vivo, ergo sum – sanus**
Communication Studies facing Health as a Construction of Social Knowledge

Thomas A. Bauer / University of Vienna, Austria

A constructivistic system-theoretical view on reality issues (in the context of this article: health) gives insights to come to realize the communication model and the cultural character of terms used as signification of and within everyday life. By that mode of problematization health is to be identified as a model of knowledge within the framework of cultural programs.

Health is not just an objective state of individual corporal or/and psychic balance (state of health), and illness is not (just) an objective state. Health and illness are referential figures, socially constructed by discursive communication and in that sense models of knowledge, terms of reference, which give culturally encoded orientation of how to be, how to feel and how to live. Health, as a model of cultural knowledge, and illness, as a culturally constructed evaluation of experiencing or understanding oneselfs or other’s situation are to one another different conceptualizations of life. There is a unity of difference between health and illness, which is life – or in better words: life is a culturally conceptualized program of understanding oneself in relation to (other) environmental experiences, it is a socially co-oriented measure of reference in order to distinguish experiences or questions of (integrative) identity post festum or in advance. Body, soul and spirit, those three points of reference of an integrative concept of health serve as indicators, by which health communication is able to be focused to cultural measures.

This theoretical approach opens the possibility to deliberate health as a category of (social) life from a closed medical observation, opens the view for illness as a state of social knowledge and challenges the competence of a culturological communication science as a resource of analysis and social intervention. Within this theoretical framework and on that culturological level of communication science the relationship between health, visions of health and health development can be thematized as matter of modeling and shaping life – which is always done unter conditions of society.

**Key words:**

Health communication, health knowledge, social construction of health, social construction of illness, health responsibility, health competence, health development, health culture, lifeguiding, theory of health communication.
THOMAS A. BAUER
CURRICULUM VITAE

o. Univ. Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer
Department of Media and Communication Studies
University of Vienna / Austria

Born 1945 Diessen / Ammersee, Germany,
Schools in Austria,
Diploma in Philosophy / Theology 1971 (Eichstätt / Germany, Fribourg, Switzerland),
PHD in Communication Studies 1973 (University of Salzburg),
Certification for Communication Training and Media Consultancy 1976 (Graz-Zürich),
Activities in Media Education, Political Education, Media- and Communication Consultance, Communication and Management Training, Group Dynamics in Companies, Public Organizations, and Universities, 1976 to 1990,
Prof. for Political Sociology and for Visual Communication at the Teacher’s College in Graz / Austria

Full Professor and Chair for Audiovisual Media and Media Culture at the Department of Media- and Communication Science at the University of Vienna since 1993.
Founder and Head of the University TV (utv-wien) and University Radio (u-ton wien) at the University of Vienna.
Head of inter-university teaching programs (Argentina, Brasil, Canada, several EU-Countries, Jordan, USA, ...) in: Urban Communication, Cultural Communications, Health Communication, Interreligious Dialogue, Journalism in Developing Countries, Public Press Service, Organizational Communication.


Partner in several European and EU-USA Research- and development projects (ECN, ENCE, EUROMEDIA, PEGASUS, CPT-CPTUSA, FUTURE STUDIES) for professional development, organizational communication, e-Learning, media education.

Conception and direction of national and international programs of journalism education and in journalism studies (Course Magazinjournalismus / Vienna, Tempus / Croatia: Media Education and Training for journalists in Countries of Transition).

Curriculum-Development for Journalism Studies, Content production and Content Management/ College Vienna.

Editor of „Context“ a quarterly review on media in the Balkans
Meber of IPI, International Press Institute, and SEEMO / IPI
Member of the Austrian Association of Communication Science
Member of the German Association of Communication Science
Member of IAMCR
President of the Austrian - American Film Association,
President of the Austrian Association of Health Communication
President of the editorial board of Vienna Community TV

Research in:
Cultural Theories of Communication and Media, Organizational Communication
(community – PR, International PR), Alternative Media Systems, Communication
Development of Communities, Media Education Systems, Communication Professional
Systems, Tele-Teaching, Urban Communication Culture, Health Communication,
Interreligious Communication, eLearning Systems

Main teaching fields:

Cultural Theory of Communication, Internet Studies, Cultural Studies (urban
communication networks), Environmental Communications, Future Studies, Media
Education, Health Communication

Publications on:
Media Education, Epistemology, Alternative Media Systems, Religious
Communications, Communication Management, Media and Politics, East-Europe-
Communications, Cultural Theory of media communication, Austriaca (Films), Cultural
Theory of Communication/ Organization Communicology.

thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at
www.thomas.bauer.at.tf