Critical Exploration of Media Related Risks and Opportunities for Deliberative Communication: Development Scenarios of the European Media Landscape

Reporting

Project Information

MEDIADELCOM
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Periodic Reporting for period 1 - MEDIADELCOM (Critical Exploration of Media Related Risks and Opportunities for Deliberative Communication: Development Scenarios of the European Media Landscape)

**Reporting period:** 2021-03-01 to 2022-02-28

**Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project**

- What is the problem/issue being addressed?
  
The detrimental effects of the absence of the culture of debate on democracy have been increasingly recognized in the context of the migration crisis, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the information war fought in connection with the war in Ukraine. Deliberative communication evaluates listening and well-grounded argumentation, enables different groups in society to find compromises and co-operate. Academic knowledge of deliberative democracy is quite broad, although a deliberative communication culture in society has received little attention in communication research. The focus on deliberative communication is one innovative aspect of the MEDIADELCOM project.

The overall problem setting of MEDIADELCOM project is threefold. Firstly, to provide a novel holistic approach to media related risks and opportunities concerning deliberative communication. Current studies on the topic are dispersed and usually do not answer the question on how different structural aspects and conditions that influence different actors create risks and opportunities (ROs) by amplifying each other. The holistic approach enables to understand the different trajectories of change. According to academic literature four domains can be identified: legal and ethical regulation of media; journalism; media usage patterns, and media related competencies. Secondly, to address the media-related monitoring capability of different European countries. Academic scholarship has been trying to catch the changes concerning media and media consumption; however, the research and knowledge acquisition needs a critical analysis of the existing data, sources and knowledge gaps concerning the media performance. Thirdly, to conduct scenario-building to enable the provision of policy recommendations.

- Why is it important for society?
  
  MEDIADELCOM uses comparative analysis, showing not only the differences between the countries,
but revealing also the countries with similar risk clusters. The analysis that takes into consideration many interrelated variables enables to find out the different potential paths of development that facilitate the manipulation techniques used in the public information space and the opportunities that to improve the quality of public communication.

What are the overall objectives?
The overall objective of MEDIADELCOM is to develop a diagnostic tool which enables the provision of holistic assessment of ROs concerning deliberative communication.

There are six specific objectives for the first period of reporting:
1) to create the conceptual model concerning the preconditions and values of deliberative communication and an actor-centred approach for actor-oriented modelling;
2) to create the concepts of risks, cumulative risks, and opportunities;
3) to create a concept and methodology for the assessment of monitoring potentiality of ROs;
4) to formulate conceptual and operational variables for revealing interrelations between the elements and domains that create ROs of deliberative communication;
5) to formulate the variables and calibration method for the comparative analysis of 14 country studies on ROs.
6) Two national studies

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

The activities of the first period included: 1) theoretical concepts of deliberative communication, risks and opportunities, as well as the adaptation of the agent-oriented approach; 2) conceptual and operational variables; 3) 14 country cases, two case studies per country; 4) the template for the bibliographical database; 5) collecting relevant publications into the database, providing material for further study.

Work performed concerning theoretical and methodological objectives.
A model was created that describes the main preconditions and values of deliberative communication (see Figures 1 and 2). The basic conditions of deliberative communication are as follows: full and equal information provided; free and equal access to arenas; process of listening and arguing; impartiality. The core values of deliberative communication (Figure 2) are as follows: freedom, trust, transparency, diversity, autonomy, human dignity, accountability and truth. The system of values makes sense only if one asks: which values are implemented by different actors in daily communication situations.

The MEDIADELCOM also introduced the actor-centred approach and the concept of different agencies provided by Margaret Archer. The country studies therefore aim to provide analysis that reveals the (inter)action, motives and abilities of different groups of agents but also how the existing structure influences the behaviour and choices of different actors in a certain country.

The task of Case Study 1 was to map the existing data sources. In order to assess the monitoring potentiality of each country in the four domains, concerning ROs emerging from the media transformations. The primary and most important conclusion that can be drawn from Case Study 1 is
that in many countries the data on the quality and quantity of media performance is sporadic and often inadequate. The differences are evident between the former socialist countries and the countries of Western Europe. Media related competencies seems to be a less studied domain and research and data on legal regulation are available to varying degrees depending on the resources and interest of the country. It is not enough to describe the relevant laws, it is necessary to ask whether the regulatory environment and daily practices actually support their implementation.

Case study 2
In order to assess the ROs, the MEDADELCOM started with a methodological step – the project partners created a system of conceptual and operational variables to be tested against empirical findings in the next phase of research. The purpose of Case Study 2 was to describe and analyse the changes in the media in the 21st century and the ROs associated with these changes, using the results of Case Study 1. The 14 country reports, are currently largely descriptive. Further analysis will be conducted for the implementation of ROs concept.

Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

The next step is to create benchmark models for all countries and their distinct resources through comparative analysis. A need for further elaboration of theoretical concepts has been raised. It is also necessary to define more precisely the question of how the activities and interactions of various agents affect the ROs related to deliberative communication.

Dissemination of the project

Website
1) The website [https://www.mediadelcom.eu/](https://www.mediadelcom.eu/) is regularly updated and contains all relevant information on the project and its teams.

Podcasts
2) MEDADELCOM has published podcasts on its website explaining the concept of deliberative culture in a popular format and giving a picture of both the activities of the consortium and the main points of the project.

Conferences
3) Presentations at a media literacy conference at the University of Sofia in September 2021. Two panel proposals have been submitted to the ECREA conference in 2022.

Publications
4) A special issue of open access journal Media and Communication will be published in 2023-2024.
Related documents

- Figure1.jpg
- Screenshot Mediadelcom webpage.png
- Figure2.jpg
- MediaDELCOM-Fig0 (002).png

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