# Session 7 Rise of The Prosumer: Democratization of Media Content Making or Labour for Free?

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# Who controls what gets into the media?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWuc18xISwI

# The example of journalism

- a profession that has developed over a couple of hundreds of years

- undergoing significant changes as technology impacts on all its aspects: funding, practices, relationship with audiences, skills set, structure of newsrooms etc.

http://www.eyerevolution.co.uk/blog/bbc-new-broadcasting-house/

# Important question for political economists of communication

Do these changes result in more democratic journalism?

Does control shift significantly away from journalists/editors?

# How do journalists understand their profession?

Public service

Autonomy

Objectivity

Immediacy

Ethics

# What gets into the news?

✖ Gatekeeping

✖ David Manning White's seminal gatekeeping study conducted in 1949 – how and why an individual editor selects certain news stories sent by the news agencies while rejecting others (about nine tenths were rejected), White's conclusion: through studying his overt reasons for rejecting news stories from the press associations we see how highly subjective, how based on the gatekeeper's own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations the communication of news really is.

✖ Subsequent studies pointed out that White disregarded organisational and institutional influences in the course of gatekeeping (news values: drama/surprise, importance/relevance/magnitude, entertainment, proximity, negativity/bad news etc.)

# News – cultural/ideological dimensions

✖ Agenda setting

✖ Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

✖ Source: http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Mass%20Media/Agenda-Setting_Theory/

# News – cultural/ideological dimensions cont.

✖ Framing - linked to the agenda-setting tradition of research

✖ Framing as a theoretical concept can be understood as the way that media emphasize certain aspects of issues or events at the expense of others when defining social processes, issues or events (Kerbel et al., 2000; Tankard, 2001). Gitlin summarizes this well by saying: 'Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters' (1980: 6). Dimitrova, D. and Stromback, J. (2011). "Election news in Sweden and the United States: A comparative study of sources and media frames." *Journalism* 13(5).

# Framing of terrorism

✖ THREAT frame – a new form of threat that requires special measures

✖ RIGHTS frame – critical of the military intervention in Iraq – breach of international law; Guantanamo Bay inmates held unlawfully

✖ REDRESS frame – developed by the terrorist groups themselves – redressing real/imaginary wrongs and injustices

✖ Deacon et al. *Researching Communications*

# Who sets the agenda/keeps the gates closed?

Mainstream media – audiences can comment, contribute contents to some extent – is this change radical enough to justify saying that journalism is more democratic now?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iU0gpS739w

# New players – amateur and professional appear

Deca – a co-operative of journalists

http://www.decastories.com/


Refugees Deeply

https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/

Citizen journalism:

https://www.bellingcat.com/

# Old players experiment with new tricks

VR – New York Times

Using technology for in-depth reporting:

http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/

# Technology plays a role in gatekeeping and even production of news

Facebook – who does the gatekeeping for News Feeds? Algorithms or human editors?

Robots replacing journalists?

# Who sets the agenda?

In some cases those outside the media (and that on a global scale):

Wikileaks

NSA leaks

Panama Papers

https://theintercept.com/2015/11/12/edward-snowden-explains-how-to-reclaim-your-privacy/?utm_source=Daily+Lab+email+list&utm_campaign=f2f15e1936-dailylabemail3&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d68264fd5e-f2f15e1936-395936393