MEDIATIZATION OF SOCIETY AS NEW THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dobrinka Peicheva

Abstract: Medialization of society is a total dependence of all social spheres and activities of existing ttraditional and new media. This also applies to the functioning of individuals, groups and institutions in the social space.

The mediatization of society, which is the topic of this article, occurs in all directions – in social contacts, work places, institutions, cultural behavior models, group and interpersonal communications, in the home, etc. Globalization itself cannot be imagined without mediatization.

The transformations that have accompanied the binding of society by the media require not only the conceptualization of mediatization but its positioning in a new theoretical perspective.

The main question here is whether, considering its new paradigmatic dimensions, the new mediatization theory should not be situated *above* instead of *alongside* the other media theories.

Key words: mediatization; media dependence; mobility; communicative action; self-publicizing; new mass communication paradigm

Introduction

The mutual influences between communication innovations and socio-cultural changes have permeated modern society, and they are still at work, and even more forcefully so, in the post-modern conditions of today [**Thompson, 1995; Stober, 2004; Couldry, 2012**]. These mutual influences transform nearly all social spheres and areas into mediatized trajectories that bring about various types of cultural consequences and redefine society as post-modern rather than modern, as an information society, a network society, or, ultimately, a mediatized society.

What G. Tarde said more than a century ago is particularly topical today: that society is a network of mutual influences, that the media create not only their public but the nation itself, that the public stands on a higher pedestal than the masses or crowds typical of modern society. [**Katz, 2006**]**.**

In fact, from the very dawn of their development, the mass media have always been intended as a counterpoint to mass society, as a potential means for reducing the heterogeneity of society. Present-day, 21st century society is not simply a mass society, and communications in it are not simply mass communications.

The accelerated processes of mutual influence between media and society are accompanied by the parallel processes of de-massification of mass communications, of personalization of media "players" and constructs, of transformations in perception, which is acquiring an increasing consumer and creative quality involving new social and cultural practices and patterns of global dimensions. For its part, society is becoming increasingly dependent on the traditional and new means of communication.

The new type of massification of communications is bringing about a new reading of communications within a given time unit, and resulting in specific formations, in a new type of cultural patterns and practices of mutual influence between media and society. The new means have grown incredibly, but, along with this, the mass contacts containing identical content have decreased.

The process of formation of new social communities and formations of a virtual and exceptionally mobile kind, the parallel existence of a physical and virtual environment and their unification in a common mediatized reality, the mixing of mass and interpersonal communication, the changing proportions between them and within them, the transformations in written culture and in culture generally, all these indicate a new type of complexity of society and of the functioning of society.

But this new complexity is accompanied by a parallel tendency of simplification of many of these processes and also by a greater facility related to compression of time and space when performing various activities, by greater access of various kinds, by new forms of group and community solidarity determined by the media. The media and society have interlocked into a special whole due to the concentration of all these processes in the media.

One of the forms of interweaving between media and society is the appearance and the sustainable positioning of the so-called social media and networks, unexampled in the past evolution of culture. These have become a haven of multiple social-communication transformations in the organizing of, and participation in, new forms of solidarity; here the ideas of Emile Durkheim are revived at a new level. Social action as interpreted by Weber is acquiring vivid dimensions in the field of communications. Today the so-called 'mass society' is increasingly synthesizing opposing characteristics: it is both an anonymous and de-concentrated society *and* a society continuously forming social groups. It is both an alienated, anomic society *and* an empathic, organized society.

G. Tarde's formulations regarding social interaction as the motive force of social development are particularly relevant today in a media-determined social network society, in the sphere of science, culture, the economy, etc. Weber's 'social action' is acquiring prominent communication dimensions.

Many of the transformations caused by this interaction between media and society go in multiple directions, and necessitate a rethinking of the social concepts and paradigms that were previously in force.

The tying of reconstructed theoretical standpoints to the contemporary dimensions of the social and media-determined communication processes, understood in this sense, could serve as an appropriate articulation of many of the transformations within society that define the appearance of its mediatization.

In proceeding specifically from the transformations of the communication models and communication interactions, and by illustrating the emergence of new social and cultural practices, we aim to contribute to the rethinking – and why not to the reconceptualization? – of the interaction between media and social development. We would like to articulate the idea of mediatization not only as an independent theory but, more than that, as a new current or new stage of social development.

Method

The presentation of the modern dimensions of the mutual influence between the media and society (including social groups and individuals, spheres and areas), objectified and explicated through the various milestones of mediatization, is based on the theoretical and empirical inquiries of the author and of a number of theorists in this field. The study is based on statistical empirical data as well as on sociological studies relevant to Bulgaria.

Transformational preconditions for the conceptualization of mediatization.

The present-day mutual influence between media and society results in numerous social and cultural transformations, which are preconditions for the conceptualization of mediatization. This mutual influence can be measured in all social spheres and processes, at group level and at individual level. Without pretending to exhaust the topic. I will emphasize those obvious transformations that are largely emblematic for mediatization and contribute to creating a relatively adequate picture of the process; we will also point out some less obvious ones, on which we have observations and empirical data.

Transformations in communicative action

It seems that modern mutual influences between the media and society have above all changed communications themselves, and communicative action as such. [**Habermas, 1995; Luhmann, 1996**].

The one-way direction of communication processes that was typical for mass communications in "classical" radio, television, the press, has now been enriched by the possibility of interruption, two-way direction, and multi-linearity.

The two-way flow and the multi-linearity of communication technologies have drawn a dividing line between "new" and "old" media, between traditional and non-traditional media and meta-media, and between the respective audiences contacting with those media. [**McQuail and Windahl, 1993; Peicheva, 2009**]. The main thing that divides the "old" from the "new" is the super-media development of the new media, or, in other words, their meta-media characteristic.

The audience is, here too, largely anonymous and dispersed, but it is far from being as passive as in the case of the linear models. The audience functions as either active or passive according to circumstances; it may be transformed into a public (in G. Tarde's sense of the term), into a creator of meanings, into an initiator of the communication process.

The provided interactivity in the evolution of contacts with the new media and the expansion – as yet to a limited degree – of this interactivity to the traditional means of mass communications, is becoming a precondition for redefining the scope of mass communications definition, for redefining concepts and processes related to the latter.

The traditional mass communications model is based on a perception of the public as passive, but this model is also undergoing transformations. It is moving on, in its extreme form, to a model of interpersonal communication through e-mails, personal blogs, and to a model of traditional mass communications in which the public enters as co-author, author, etc. These transformations in the participation of recipients presuppose a new view of the audience and make it possible to identify the audience as a mix of convergent processes: simultaneous passiveness and activeness, simultaneous directness and indirectness, and as a mix of communication means used simultaneously: hearing, speaking, writing, reading.

The new communication models are based on a view of the audience as both recipient and communicator, as a bearer of mobile communication actions, as a focus of communication means, as self-controlling its own media space, etc.

This transformation of the model of mass communications really creates the need for redefining and conceptualizing the paradigm of mass communication. Mass communication is increasingly *not* a one-way process, *not* without instantaneous feedback. On the contrary, it tends to be two-way and instantaneous. The public involved in it is more active than passive.

The transformations taking place in the model of communication reflect upon the communicative action itself, and hence create the need for reconceptualizing it. In the transformed communication model, the communicative action is a real interactive process with more or less equally positioned participating sides involved.

Communicative action is changing from a one-way into a two-way process and is becoming tantamount to social action, and vice versa. The fact that it unfolds instantaneously, places it on a higher pedestal, imparts utilitarian features to it, makes it preferable, loads it with advantages. It takes place both in virtual and in real space and is unrestricted as regards combining forms and modifications – among other ways, by densifying time and space; it fills social action with greater opportunities and ultimately "inscribes" social action into a new type of communicative action. In expropriating traditional social action and by enhancing the possibilities of social action, communicative action could serve as a more adequate basic unit for sociological analysis.

Mediatization of social contacts
and transformations of written culture

The mediatization of social contacts first began with the appearance and widespread use of stationary telephones, fax machines and other technological determinants of interpersonal contacts. But mobile phones and other mobile communication means inscribed in the Internet led to a definition of mediatization in terms of mobility.

Communications with relatives, friends, acquaintances, and business relations are increasingly conducted by mobile telephone and through the Internet, while "live" meetings are increasingly being replaced by communication through the new media. The attitude toward the mobile telephone has undergone some evolution, which has taken a different temporal course in different countries but has had similar characteristics in all cases [**Ishii, 2006; Katz and Sugiyama, 2006; Kim, H; G. Kim; H. Park; R. Rice, 2007; Lu; Weber, 2007**].

From a prestigious accessory, as it appeared to be in the first years of its history, it went on to be a fashionable attribute, especially for young people, and has ultimately become an irrevocable necessity of everyday life. An equally large share of social contacts takes place through the Internet. The use of the Internet does not depend entirely on the possession of a personal computer, for access to it can be had at the workplace, in schools and universities, in Internet-cafés, etc.

A representative survey[1] conducted in Bulgaria in 2014 has revealed a varied picture of Internet communications by persons aged between 16 and 74 according to the place of access [see **Table 1**].

Table 1

Inndividuals using the Internet, by place of access

Place of Internet access	2010		2011		2013	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
At home	2131266	**89,5**	2 279 021	**91,0**	2 387 096	**95,4**
At place of work	837 921	**33,6**	855 687	**35,6**	934 887	**36,7**
At place of education	285 220	**14,2**	360 694	**10,5**	276 036	**11,9**
In other people's houses	134 315	**9,1**	231 825	**7,7**	202 196	**14,4**
At other places	218 240	**10,3**	263 351	**7,2**	187 903	**19,6**

Note: The persentage is calculated on the basis of individuals who used the Internet in the last 3 months

---

[1] The representative surveys on "Information and Communication Technology usage in households and enterprises are" are a joint surveys of the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute and the European Community. The surveys methodology and tool are in full compliance with the European Community Directives and Regulation. No 808/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council. Retrieved from: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=48

Iv. Evtimov [**Iv. Evtimov**, **2009**] has characterized access to the Internet as an infrastructural necessity similar to electricity, central water supply and heating, central sewerage, etc. It is true, of course, that the Internet has become an element of everyday life, but not in the way that these infrastructural elements are. The Internet transcends them as being a spiritual catalyst and centre of all kinds of intellectual and cultural activities.

Internet transcends the merely infrastructural dimension, for it has become a mega-informational, mega-cultural, mega-creative, mega-contact, and ultimately mega-aggregate cultural formation that supplies the full range of cultural forms of activity. Today the daily lives of people communicating through the Internet has become divided into two parts – real and Internet-based, and these two parts are interwoven. These two worlds have merged into a new formation in which the virtual is increasingly acquiring the features of the real, not only because the virtual has become a real part of life, but also because it contains a growing number of elements of the real.

Internet communications are predominant in relations between colleagues and friends, and in business affairs.

In the last years since nation-wide statistics began to be regularly registered regarding this indicator in Bulgaria, the number of people effectuating Internet communication has nearly quadrupled for most age groups. The fact that in the age group of those above 45 and above 55 it has more than quadrupled, growing by as many as 3 times, demonstrates that the Internet has become a permanent part of daily relations between people. [See **Table 2**].

Table 2
Individuals regularly using the Internet (every day or once a week)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	39,7	41,6	46,4	50,3	51,2	53,7	54,6
By statistical region							
Severozapaden	34,1	36,4	39,0	37,5	42,7	45,1	40,4
Severen tsentralen	34,9	39,7	42,6	47,9	48,4	55,3	55,0
Severoiztochen	34,6	36,3	36,8	45,5	47,8	52,1	52,6
Yugoiztochen	39,7	36,2	42,8	49,4	46,3	45,9	51,0
Yugozapaden	51,8	54,7	61,2	60,6	63,4	64,1	65,3
Yuzhen tsentralen	32,4	34,9	40,5	47,5	45,4	48,3	49,9
By sex							
Male	41,4	42,1	47,5	51,1	52,6	54,7	55,2
Female	38,1	41,2	45,3	49,5	50,0	52,6	54,0
By educational attainment level							
Basic education or lower	15,6	15,9	17,1	19,0	19,2	23,4	24,7
Upper secondary education	39,8	42,9	47,9	52,5	51,8	54,7	53,9
Tertiary education	75,1	79,8	81,6	85,3	86,1	86,3	86,3

By age							
16-24	75,1	76,1	80,0	81,3	79,5	83,1	84,1
25-34	60,1	59,8	67,7	72,0	73,5	76,6	82,0
35-44	46,8	49,0	58,5	65,8	66,6	70,2	69,2
45-54	32,0	36,6	46,5	46,3	47,8	50,9	52,8
55-64	13,9	18,4	26,4	25,9	29,8	32,1	31,4
65-74	3,1	3,2	6,2	8,2	8,3	9,0	10,5
By activity							
Employed	50,8	54,8	63,1	68,1	67,7	70,7	71,8
Unemployed	21,9	26,0	31,4	35,1	39,6	38,6	37,4
Students	89,9	93,5	94,2	96,2	96,2	96,7	94,9
Other inactive	6,9	8,3	12,2	14,1	15,5	16,6	18,6

The persentage is calculated on the basis of total population of individuals aged between 16 and 74 years by breakdowns.[2]

The study of Internet communications also confirms Rogers' model of diffusion. [**Rogers, 1962].**

Of course, today communication between people is increasingly shifting to the so-called social networks, and this is influencing the ratio with e-mail communication; in any case, this fact only confirms that interpersonal communication is being transferred to the mobile media – the mobile telephones and the Internet-based new means of communication. Another immanent characteristic of theirs is their interchangeability, which makes them variously preferred in various time ranges and circumstances.

It has been found that SMS messaging is not only a way of conversing but also a channel for conveying greetings and congratulations of various kinds. Over one third of the respondents prefer messaging when they have to send a greeting to friends, relatives, acquaintances, and about two thirds of people use it to greet colleagues[3] [See **Table 3**].

Table 3
Holiday greetings

	Through direct telephone calls	Through SMS
To relatives	72,2%	27,8%
To friends	62,5 %	37,5%
To close colleagues	24,7%	75,3%

---

[2] http://www.nsi.bg/bg/content/2808

[3] The representative sociological surveys on Mobile phones and models of internet usages were conducted by assoc. prof. Ivan Evtimov in – Laboratory of sociology at NBU, 2009. Retrieved from: http://bgsociety.nbu.bg/4.htm

Communication with friends and relatives is increasingly done through mobile telephones and the Internet, while "live" meetings are decreasing in number.

Interpersonal communication is shifting from face-to-face contacts to increasing mediatized communication. Direct, live social contact is being increasingly replaced by contacts through letters, messages, or mobile telephones. [**Campbell, 2007; Ahonen, 2008**].

Past cultural-behaviour patterns of communication are acquiring an increasingly mobile character. In other words, a new media-determined culture of behaviour has emerged, the basic feature of which is mobility.

Mediatizing of social contacts is a new socio-cultural phenomena characterized by immanent mobility and by a change of different cultural-behavior practices and behavior models.

The media orientation of social contacts actually restructure written communication foremost. [**Murphy, 2008**].

The restructuring of the general picture of written communications tends towards a growing proportion of electronic mail. As a result of this, the use of traditional letter mailing services and stationary telephones has greatly decreased. The restructuring and concentration of writing within the mobile media is an intense and growing trend – firstly, a growth in terms of number of communication acts per unit of time; in a second aspect, in terms of a change of mediation technology; in a third aspect, there is a change of material bearers. The modifications and varieties of written communication through SMS messages, e-mails, chatting, etc., have given rise to a new written culture, predominantly youthful in style; the new verbal equivalent of this style has emerged as a mix of national and international language, as a combination of verbal and non-verbal expressions (emoticons), as a mingling of digital and lexical signs and symbols. The constant element in the contemporary restructuring of communication space is their mobility; the constant feature of the mobile media is their interchangeability, mutual compatibility, and conjoining.

The potential for immediate feedback is a kind of revolutionary development in the more than 500 years of evolution of traditional written communications; it is a paradigmatic cultural change of revolutionary importance.

Mediatizing of social contacts as a result of new interaction between media and individuals give rise to at least three significant transformations of a "radical" kind.

– Restructuring of interpersonal communications from verbal to written: Interpersonal communication shifts from face-to-face, i.e. immediate, contacts to increasingly mediated communication. Direct, live social contact is being increasingly replaced by contacts through letters, messages, or mobile telephones;

– The traditional written communication is transformed into electronic-based written messages: e-mails, chat, and SMS messages;

– The modification of written language through the new media is reflected in a new written language, a new type of written culture, which frequently contains surrogate elements;

New mega aggregates and restructuring of public cultural space

The new media are establishing with increasing persistence the aggregate type of media "messages".

The new mega aggregates of media content and cultural content have revolutionized our notions of culture and cultural life, of creativity and co-authorship, of participation and co-participation, of perception and possession of cultural products, of access and inaccessibility, of selling and buying, etc. These aggregates are not only a means of reproduction of contents but also of co-participation and joint creation.

The possibility that now exists of publishing opinions and recommendations regarding materials, and situating these opinions as a part of the materials themselves, reveals that the new mega aggregate products are a full-bodied communicative synthesis, a combination of mass and interpersonal communication, a mix of output and feedback, a communicative action. Moreover, the possibility for instantaneous publicizing of opinions and other texts, often and increasingly enhances the attractiveness of these forms of publicizing compared with the other ones.

Self-publicizing is often a response stemming from failed trust in paradigms, programs, personalities, that claim to offer interpretations of the highest instance, and in traditional publicity-providing institutions.

Using the new technological opportunities offered them, people increasingly create and publicize video clips through their mobile phones, and administrate their own sites, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, etc. [**Jenkins, 1992, 2007; Gillett, 2007; Kaare, 2008; Domingo & Heinonen, 2008**].

The speed of publicizing, which is very important for authors eager to have their work quickly reach the public, and not rarely involves the indication of the author's specific contributions, make Internet publications desirable and preferable to the old system, where one must wait nearly a year, at times longer, before one's texts are published on paper.

The mediatization of cultural practices transforms the practices of publicizing as well, and, respectively, restructures the public space of culture [**Hepp, 2012**].

The notion of restructuring the public space now applies not only to the appearance of new mass communication means in the traditional sense (with their organizational structure and necessary staff) and not only to the modified Internet variants of these traditional media – variants that are likewise collective, but also to the newly appearing media created and administered by individuals; these new media are producing and disseminating on a public and mass scale. The turning of individuals into objectified media, which has begun in the last ten years and is expanding right before our eyes, is perhaps the strongest proof of the restructuring occurring in cultural and public space. Moving onward from the collective-mediating mechanisms of official publicizing that constructs a concrete pictures of reality, the trend is now moving towards a counter-cultural processes, or in other words towards individual-mediating mechanisms for publicizing of one's own constructs of reality.

Through this auto-publicizing, there has appeared in the new media a *new structural element in the action aspect*, a new kind of actor who acts both as agent

and consumer, both as recipient and communicator. These are the bloggers, the forumists, the authors of video clips, of fan fictions, and other materials publicized on specialized Internet sites and social networks, such as Twitter, My Space, Netlog, Facebook, YouTube, etc. Auto-publicizing may be viewed as a response to a long history of mistrust in the paradigms, programmes, personalities that claim to provide last-instance interpretations, mistrust in the institutions that provide and effectuate publicity.

Fan fiction is a new creative phenomenon in the cultural-communication process, which practically turns recipients into creative communicators who materialize their responses by new, creative intervention; this too is a form of publicizing. In creating continuations of stories, pre-stories, alternative stories, collages interweaving several works (crossovers), etc., the recipients-fans of a given work of art publicize in a specialized Internet site, thus becoming co-authors of the original authors, and co-participants in creating and building up of the fictional characters. They are objectified on a non-commercial basis as interpreters of the original author's works [**Jenkins, 1992, 2006; Baym, 2010; Pearson, 2010**].

When the Internet supplied the possibility for intense growth of this activity and for the creation of non-commercial databases, fandoms appeared, as a form of organization of creators of fanfictions. Fandoms are specialized in separate arts and even in concrete works. We see that the mediatization of cultural participation has become an irreversible trend.

The fact that individuals are becoming a media in themselves is in fact the most significant evidence of the mediatization of society. From consumers of messages, people are becoming their creators; from passive participants in culture and social life, they are becoming active ones; from a public, they are becoming actors.

Transformations in group communications

Before the appearance of new social network sites in the Internet, such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc., the conceptualization of group communication as generalized by the classical sociologists had not undergone any theoretical reconstruction.

Group communication within the so-called social networks in the Internet was transformed in a way unexampled in the history of culture and communications, and this has made it hard to conceptualize it in a simple way, to generalize it in simple terms.

Despite their exceptionally mass scale and the frequent mingling of interpersonal and group communication, the new type of constructions are mostly a media form or a media framework of group communications, are means for group communication or neo-communication constructs of group communications, rather than means of mass communication. The elements of combining and interpenetrating of interpersonal, group, and mass communications, build up a new media form of group communications in the Internet, represent a new media construct of group communication, a media synthesis that combines elements of non-traditional interpersonal, group, and mass communication. As

paradoxical as it might seem, this neo-group-communication model is evolving from the micro level to the macro level, and assuming meta model features of sorts, inasmuch as it is the focus of all possible forms and applications of Internet-based communication. Among the numerous arguments in support of the meta-model characteristics of this new media formation, is the existing large variety of forms of observation, participation, and involvement, of exerting and undergoing influence, and of kinds of communication (including interpersonal, group, and mass communication).

Its constant mobile communication configuration is what makes this meta-model unparalleled. The combination of the three forms of communication in a new social network model of contact is, moreover, technologically conditioned, not mechanically conditioned as were nearly all communication means in the past; this is why we may characterize and distinguish this new type as unexampled in the history of communications.

The media-based construction raises group communication to a level it never attained in its past evolution, by expanding its potential to all possible participations in communication configurations.

Together with this, it additionally restructures the communication space of the Internet [**Habermas, 1989, 2004**]. The sending of personal messages to which the other members of the group have no access, together with the writing of non-personal or personal announcements on what may be compared to an announcement board, open to all participants in group communication the dissemination of already published information or of ideas or viewpoints constructed even as they are being made public to the group; all of these are restructuring the previous forms of Internet communication.

On the other hand, the combination of interpersonal, group and mass communications, as well as of the three basic communication models (the unilinear, the interactive, and the two-stage models) in this new type of group contacts, where there is practically no possibility of control or regulation of any kind, entails the possibility of contradictory effects, which may be far more democratic or far more manipulative, more integrative or disintegrative, more uniting or more disuniting, more open to entertainment material or to culture, and more engaging for the leisure time of people.

The dissemination of social networks and participation in them is constantly growing. "The Global Faces and Networked Faces" report of Nielsen Online[4] reveals the new role and scope of social networks. The report registers that the networks are growing twice as fast as the other four large sectors of online activities (searches, portals, software, and e-mail). One out of every 11 minutes spent in the Internet falls in this category.

The continuously growing number of participants in the social networks justifies the conclusion that this type of communication is not a surrogate of live contact but a different sort of "live" connection that grows to incredible proportions and may have serious social consequences. The new type of group commu-

---

[4] See Global faces and networked places. (2009) Retrieved from ttp://blog.nielsen.com/ nielsenwire/wp-ontent/uploads/2009/03/nielsen_globalfaces_mar09.pdf

nication and group structures are positioned not only according to professional characteristics, but according to shared interests, to a new type of acquaintance and friendship, and, beyond the framework of the virtual, they create real relationships between people in a unique construct; moreover, they are mobile and interchangeable. These new media formations of group communication, with their unique socio-cultural dimensions, are indeed independent of time and space and of the age and qualification of the participants; they are dynamic in nature and possess internal mobile sub-structures, are aimed at solidarity and expansion [**Dowining, 2008; Cammaerts, 2008**].

Since new elements were included in them (such as e-mails and wikis), it would not be exaggerated to say that communications in Facebook and other such represent a micro model of Internet communications in general.

Regardless of the complexity of its conceptualization and the difficulty of making generalizations about it, group communication (for instance Facebook, the most widespread network) points to the appearance of:

– a new unique synthesis of the already existing kind of communications – interpersonal, group and mass;

– a new media structure of an agenda-setting kind, which disseminates facts, events, and experiences;

– a new "hammer and anvil" for social cohesion and solidarity of people;

– a new form in which people make acquaintance and satisfy their needs;

– a new environment for creativity and popularizing cultural products;

– a new center for conveying various kinds of greetings and wishes;

– a new tribune for organizing various events: flash mobs, strikes, demonstrations, revolutions, etc.;

– a new means of "live" contact that keeps unflagging the mutual interest and contacts between friends and acquaintances;

– a new organization of leisure time.

Mediatizing of home space

The mediatization of the home is a theme that has been meagerly articulated in sociological literature. The topic has not been the focus of theorization, except for certain publications relevant to the use of leisure in the home, consumption of radio, television, books, the press, and the effects and impact of all these. The process of transformation of the home from a place for living into a workplace has also not yet been given its due theoretical attention, except in the form of prognoses about future changes.

In fact, my several-year-long efforts to seek theoretical arguments demonstrating the mediatization of society, including that of the home, "compelled" me to envisage a special emphasis in the surveys devoted to the new media.

The main conclusion from the data of the survey conducted by the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute and the two sociological surveys was that Internet is a means of communication positioned predominantly in the household.

The media, including the new ones, have become permanently situated in people's homes. The presence of these media in the households of our country is growing in direct proportion to the increase of home computers. Having first

started out as a fashionable domestic article, the Internet is now a basic means of communication, together with television and mobile phones.

The number of people who regularly use Internet at home has tripled. Table 2 shows that by 2009 39, 7 % of the people used Internet at home, compared with 13,5 % in 2004, when NSI first started statistical registration of Internet communication.

From the indicators used and the preferences expressed in the surveys (**seefootnote 1**), it becomes evident that the basic directions of internet communication in the household comprise all aspects: mail, information and culture, learning, business activity, etc.

We find that e-mail holds an unexampled high share of Internet communication in households: the growth was from 59, 7% in 2004 to 81, 1% in 2009.

The cultural-information area is the second area of use of Internet at home: this includes seeking information and online information services of all sorts, ranging from travel arrangements and reservations to applying for a job, reading newspapers and magazines, making a personal archive on certain topics and fields. What is impressive in this area is the high concentration here of use related to news and reference. It is to this function that the transformation of Internet corresponds to an environment for the traditional media in their electronic modifications; also serving this function are the new media for which Internet is the sole environment.

The third sphere of Internet communication in the home is that of education. Internet has proven to be an exceptionally useful means for educational purposes and goals related to teaching, and it is expanding its scope in the field of education. Understandably, this share has increased twice since 2006. It is no coincidence that so many Internet-based scientific journals have appeared.

The economic area of Internet use in households has a smaller share. Still, it has its supporters. In fact, the foremost economically-related priorities in Internet use are chiefly those connected with trade and banking operations.

The use of Internet for electronic trade by households is particularly successful for the purchase of books and teaching materials, followed by trade in clothes and sports commodities, films, music, travel, hotel reservations, etc.

The mediatization of the home – even when measured solely by computerization and Internet communication – in its various forms and varieties, most of which are utilitarian ones, and the processes of reorientation and shifting of the workplace to the home, are indicative of the growing range of processes and consequences related to the mediatization of society.

Together with the other media-determined processes in the home, the domestic space is increasingly becoming a new mediatized centre for various activities: economic, cultural, educational, informational, commercial, administrative references, etc.

Mediatizing of work and economical relations

The mediatization of the work process is transforming the *framework of the working environment*. The actual work environment as we know it now consists of a mix of realities: it is a combination of physical objects and web-based elements,

a combination of basic and additional work environment existing in parallel, with frequent changes in the proportion of the two, etc.

This parallel working environment has gradually acquired the dimensions of reality and reveals the specificity of the mediatization of the work process and of the transformations of the work environment in multiple directions [**Peicheva, 2003; 2006; 2011**].

This parallel working environment complements the characteristics of mediatization of the work process and the transformations resulting from it, the dimensions of which are displayed in the following aspects:

– Rationalization of the work process. Internet and the other communication means rationalize work processes: they facilitate activities, speed up the performance of tasks, etc. – Determination of occupational activities: the professional and regulatory scope of certain professional positions are transformed and new territories are being taken over by certain professions through communication mechanisms [**Castells, 1996; Peicheva, 2003**];

– Work is made more creative: the new communication technologies are positioned directly in the different stages of production, and they are *making the work process more creative*. Mediatization is reorganizing the work process in several directions: in data analysis; in the multi-variant plan approach and multi-variant possible solutions; in assigning specific meanings to the separate approaches; in rationalizing activities in the desired direction. The possibilities offered for taking a creative approach to production processes have as a prerequisite the diligent striving for better performance, for higher satisfaction with one's work, higher motivation and satisfaction with one's professional and personal realization.

Mediatization, understood as a concentration of all possible forms and channels of communication, is becoming a *new environment of work activity and a mechanism of performing that activity*. Depending on the specific work activity, the media environment may be an added one, existing together with the physical environment, or a basic one; in all cases the media environment is the new space of work activity.

It is no secret that the environment of work no longer has to necessarily be in the firm office. The place of work can now be one's home, or the head office of the firm, or one of the firm's branches in the province or on the other side of the globe. [NBU surveys showed that 26 % of respondents prefer to work electronically at home].

The round-the-clock working hours achieved through the new media ensure 24 hour service and lead to a new type of effectiveness, which is also media determined. The financial institutions of one and the same firm are beginning to function in different time zones, and sales of stocks, raw materials and currency are made day and night. In their totality, these changes are bringing about the most profound reconstruction of the work environment since the beginning of the industrial era. This environment is acquiring new media-determined dimensions:

– From physical concentration, we move on to physical de-concentration and then to a new concentration within a media scope;

– From centralization of activities, passing through decentralization, we come to a new centering in the media.

In fact the media determinateness of the work environment has become an economic indicator.

Being equipped with Internet technologies and their applications is considered a prerequisite for economic success.

The Internet is an alternative to a large number of traditional activities, and its application to economic activity (commerce and services, etc.) is bringing about fundamental media transformations in those activities, the appearance of new branches, but is also redefining economy itself as an Internet economy.

The media tie of work to economic relations is transforming almost all aspects: professional positions, activities, products, size of organization, markets, forms of remuneration, ways of organizing and of management, positioning, business relations, branches, image, etc. These transformations are becoming irrevocable and leading to great changes in the other spheres as well – science (e-science), culture (e-culture), education (e-education), etc.

New Media Forms of Institutional Life

The mutual interactions between media and institutions are bringing about the emergence of new media forms of institutional life in parallel with the physical existence of institutions. As a result of this, every organizational and institutional unit has undergone many internal transformations and restructurings, which reflect on more general social relations.

Almost every organizational unit – ministry, association, committee, firm, etc., whether in the public or private sector, invariably presents itself to the public through an official site, blog or Facebook profile [**Fuchs, 2009; Peicheva, 2011**].

This new media form often provides us with a wider, more complete idea of the institution's functioning, of its activity, positions, structure, of new events; this is an idea that goes beyond the merely physical functioning.

In fact, the thing that should be conceptualized, due to the media transformations of organizations, is the trend of articulation of the organizations as a kind of media structures, as a specific form of new "specialized" mass media (existing alongside the new media of individuals), and the consequences of this trend.

Self-publicizing proves to be an obligatory aspect of the functioning of organizations in post-modernity, for images are evidently essential for every organization: its new media image, constructed by the organization itself, the physical image of the organization as it exists in space, and the image constructed by other media, old or new.

A closer scrutiny of the site of a given institution reveals that it contains the whole variety of its functions and activities: its history, programs, strategies, statutes, current news, organization structure, management and administration structures, way of communications, etc. The site is positioned as a sort of management mechanism and a new form of publicity.

Hence, the interaction between media and institutions brings about the following transformations:

– new media practices and forms of institutional life;

– new actors linked with the media and working in servicing the new media institutional forms;

– a new public;

– new mechanisms of management and participation of the managed in management;

– new forms of informing and publicity.

Perhaps the most significant of these media-determined transformations is their connection with publicity and democratization in all aspects: transparency, civic participation, choice, etc.

Therefore, mediatization is seen to be a precondition of democratization; and vice versa – democratization ensures mediatization.

Mediatization of globalization

The changes in the global economy, which are often reflected in the media mechanisms of the functioning of the economy and in the media-determined activities, have a reverse effect on the global circulation of media products.

In fact, it is precisely the traditional and new media, with their gravitational pull, that are the focal points through which and by which the globalization processes have produced to a great extent and continue to produce the variety of their immanent forms, thereby revealing that the mediatization of society is a precondition of globalization.

Now as before, the socialization of processes can be accomplished only through various communication networks and institutions. Moreover, even the construction itself would be impossible today without the interactive networks and media formations. Today it is impossible for multinational companies, world banks, trade union organizations, world associations, and other global organizations to start, function and develop without the media as a precondition for globalization, without the instantaneous interaction that ensures their space of functioning, without the mediatization of societies.

Both at a social-structural and interpersonal level, the presence of, and dependence on, the media are a fundamental axis of globalization. In other words, the mediatization of society is not only a process concomitant to globalization, not only a constitutive resource of globalization, not only its ingredient, not only a supportive concept for it, but also a means for identifying, presenting, and controlling the globalization process.

If we continue Apudarai's idea, as expressed in an interview, that the term globalization has been established as a substitute for the terminology related to transnational and world formations and information streams, and in order to define a new stage after modernity [**Rantanen, 2006**], we may assume, by analogy, that mediatization is a more precise term that subsumes all of this. Mediatization is not only the backbone but the cardiovascular system of the global world, and hence an identifier for post-modernity. And while globalization is mostly an abstraction requiring further concretization, mediatization is concretely denotative and may serve as an unambiguous label for post-modernity.

Discussions and conclusions

The effects of mediatization could likewise be problematized and articulated in terms of media-determined neo-constructions and phenomena that are ambivalent in their impact. Some of the more significant and ambivalent phenomena which should be problematized and discussed, are the following:

– The spread of "universal communicability": communicability through the classical media, communicability in interpersonal contacts, in group forms of contact, and the obtruding "message" that thrusts itself upon the contents and analysis;

– The processes of vulgarizing of media performance in the style of pop-folk music. These are evident in both "classical" and new media forms in different variations: folklorizing and a mock popular style of expression; tabloid-style news reporting; spreading of unverified information; speculating with popular expectations and hopes; authors self-vulgarizing their style of presentation; the labeling of people with nicknames; discrediting of processes and persons; self-aggrandizement; likening persons and things to others, etc.;

– Diluting authorship: poly-variant artifacts and, not rarely, an irreverent attitude to the original works;

– Minimizing the role of the media as the "fourth power"; it is increasingly rare today for the media to fulfill their role of corrective of government institutions and officials. The old expression "the dogs bark but the caravan moves on" is increasingly true for the media situation in Bulgaria;

– "Communicative diffusion" **[Doulov, 2002]** and changes in personal identification in Internet communications, together with the ensuing consequences;

- Addiction to the Internet., hacking, abuse of copyrights, abuse of lottery games;

– Cyber crime: threats, terrorism, various kinds of theft, pornography, etc;

– Reducing of live contacts between relatives and friends and growth of electronic contacts, including children's games, etc.

The list of ambivalent effects could be enlarged with many others in many different spheres, but those listed above are sufficient to show there are contrasting aspects in the mediatization of society.

But although the changes taking place in communications and the media may give cause for concern, the positive aspects are not fewer, and perhaps more, than the negative ones.

Regardless of the convenience provided by the new media-determined forms that people are constantly in contact with, every person also needs more personal communication of some kind, for instance a direct phone call, or a traditional exchange of letters.

But there is nothing wrong with communicating through the internet in the forms we choose – writing, reading, contemplating, or creating, learning or being entertained; we would do well to take advantage of these new communication opportunities. In a highly utilitarian and mediatized world, a person is able to make the most rational choice of the form of communication, taking into account the time, the place, the people, the institutions and the possibilities of the concrete moment.

In the mediatized society a person can be present in the everyday life of his colleagues, relatives, and friends, regardless of the distance separating them. Social actions of all kinds are gradually but definitely becoming transformed into communicative actions. Communication means are becoming constant intermediaries in our social existence.

Today, more than ever, N. Luhmann is been proven right in his view that society is a communication system, is essentially based on communication. P. Berger and T. Luckmann have also been proven right as regards the importance of the concept of communicative action.

"Communicative action – says Habermass – serves traditions and helps renew cultural knowledge, and it does this not only through the functional aspect of mutual comprehension; it serves social interaction and solidarity building not only by helping to coordinate action; it serves the creation of personal identities not only in the socialization aspect, etc.[5]

Today we may follow up these assertions of Habermas by stating that communicative action in the mediatized society is basic to all activities; moreover, it rationalizes activities to their possible maximum. Habermas's idea regarding the interweaving of the action approach with the communicative dimensions of actions has been confirmed. Today there are many more proofs, not only as regards this interweaving, but also regarding the determining effect of communications.

The transformations observed in nearly all social spheres and those at the group and individual level provoke a reassessment of Max Weber's social action paradigm; they also lead to new conceptualizations regarding the communicative determinations.

Social action is transformed into communicative action in nearly all areas – in activities connected with work, in relations with institutions, in culture, science, education, etc., enhances the status of communicative action to that of a fundamental concept in sociology. The combination of human intervention, operation at a distance, instantaneity, and physical result, represents the new mobile trajectory of communicative action in the mediatized society. Communicative action is a more comprehensive concept than social action. The communicative aspect is the basis and the framework in which social action acquires its immanent features.

Since 2003, when I first published my idea regarding the mediatization of society, and tried to present arguments in support of this thesis, many new media-determined processes have occurred, new representative and in-depth surveys have been carried out, many new observations have been accumulated. The fact that such a development is taking place is supported by the articulation of these processes in works by many authors **[Schulz, 2004; Hjarvard, 2008; Livingstone, 2009; Lundby, 2009; Hepp, 2012]**.

Today, the mediatizing of society is an undeniable fact. It would not be farfetched to say that the media, and their development, are contributing in a

---

[5] See Theory of communicative action. Habermass basic concepts and ideas http://historic.ru/books/item/f00/s00/z0000022/st079.shtml

greater degree to the mediatization of societies than industrialization contributed to their industrial development.

There are serious reasons to assert that mediatization of society may represent a third stage of social history, following after Max Weber's "traditional" and "modern" stages.

REFERENCES

Dulov, V. 2002. Виртуална реалност и виртуално общество [Virtualna realnost] Sofia: Virtualzenter.

Evtimov, Iv. & Picheva, D. 2009. Модели на употреба на интернет [Modeli na Internet upotreba]. Retrieved from http://bgsociety.nbu.bg/4.htm (In Bulgarian).

Peicheva, D.2003. *Икономика и комуникации. Светът на комуникациите или медийното общество*, [Ikonomika I komunikazii. Svetut na komunikaziite ili medializirano obstestvo] Sofia: Kvazar .

Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ahonen, T. 2008. *Mobile as 7th of the mass media: cellphone, cameraphone, iPhone, smartphone.* London: Futuretext.

Berger, P.& T. Luckmann. 1966. *The social construction of reality. A treatise on sociology of knowledge.* Garden City, New York: Anchor Books.

Baym, N. 2010. 'Social media from musicians' *Perspectives Online Fandom*. Retrieved from http://www.onlinefandom.com/.

Campbell, S. 2007. 'A cross-cultural comparison of perceptions and uses of mobile telephony'. *New Media and Society*. vol.9, April, 343-364 doi: 10.1177/1461444807075016.

Castells, M.1996. *The information age*: Blackwell Publishers.

Couldry, N. 2008. 'Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling'. *New Media & Society,* 10(3): 439-457. doi: 10.1177/1461444808089414.

Coldry, N. 2012. *Media society world*. London: Polity.

Domingo, D., & Heinonen, A. 2008. 'Weblogs and journalism. A typology to explore the blurring boundaries'. *Nordicom Review* 29, 1, 3-15.

Dowining, J. 2008. 'Social movement theories and alternative media'. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, March, vol 1 No1, 40-51. doi/10.1111/**j.**1753-9137.2007.

Fuchs, Ch.2009. *Social networking sites and the surveillance society*. Salzburg/ Vienna, Research Group UTI. ISBN 978-3-200- 01428-2.

Gillett, J. 2007. 'Internet web logs as cultural resistance: A study of the SARS arts project' *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 31; 28-43. doi: 10.1177/0196859906294840.

Habermas, J. 1989. *The structural transformation of the public sphere*: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. 1995. *The theory of communicative action*. Vol. 1. Reason and the rationalisation of society. Cambridge: Polity Press, Blackwell Publishers.

Hepp, A. 2012 . 'Mediatization as "molding force on the media'. *Communications*, 37, 1-28.

Hjarvard, S. 2008. 'The mediatization of society. A Theory of the media as agents of social and cultural change', *Nordicom Review*, 29 (2), 105-134.

Ishii, K. 2006. 'Implications of mobility: The uses of personal communication media in everyday life'. *Journal of communication*, 56 (2), 346-365. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00023.x

Jenkins, H. 2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.

Jenkins, H. 2007. 'From YouTube to YouNiversity'. *Chronicle review* 53(24) B9-B10.

Lu, J. & Weber, I. 2007.'State, power and mobile communication', *New Media &Society,Volume* 9. December, 925-944. doi: 10.1177/1461444807082640.

Kaare, B. 2008.'Youth as producers. Digital stories of faith and life'. *Nordicom Review*. November 2 vol 29.

Katz, E. 2006. "Rediscovering Gabriel Tarde." *Political Communication*. Vol. 23(3), p. 263 – 270.

Katz, E. J. & Sugiyama, S. 2006. 'Mobile phones as fashion statements: evidence from student surveys in the US and Japan'. *New media & society*. doi: 10.1177/1461444806061950.

Kellner, D.1995 *Media Cultute*. London: Routledge.

Kim, H; G. Kim; H. Park; R. Rice, 2007. 'Configurations of relationships in different media: FtF, Email, Instant Messenger, Mobile Phone, and SMS'. *JCMC* 12 1183–1207.

Livingstone, S. 2009. 'On the Mediation of Everything'. *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 1-18. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01401.x

Lundby, K. (Ed.). 2009. *Mediatization: concept, changes, consequences*. New York: Peter Lang.

Murphy, P. 2008. 'Writing media culture representation and experience in media ethnography', *Communication Culture & Critique* vol.1 No 3 September, 268-286 doi: 10.1111/j.1753-9137.2008.00023.x

Pearson, R. 2010. 'Fandom in the digital era'. *Popular Communication*, Volume 8http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~db=all~content=t775653693~tab=issueslist~branches=8 - v8, Issue 1 January, Taylor & Francis Group, 84 – 95. doi:10.1080/15405700903502346.

Peicheva, D. 2006. 'Beginnings of a mediatization of modern society'. *The Romanian Review of Journalism and Communication*, year 1, № 2-3.

Peicheva, D. 2009. 'The right to commuication'. In *Sociology and Low*: *The 150th Anniversary of Emile Durkheim* (1858-1917). Cambrige Schoolar Publishing .

Peicheva, D. 2011. *Mediatized reality*. SWU Publishing. ISBN 978-9-546-80732-8 (In Bulgarian).

Rantanen, T. 2006. 'A man behind scapes. An interview with Arjun Appadura'i. *Global Media and Communication* [1742-76652:1] Volume 2(1). 7–19. doi: 10.1177/1742766506061814.

Rogers E.1962. *Diffusion of innovations*. New York.

Schulz, W. 2004. 'Reconstructing mediatization as an analytical concept'. *European Journal of Communication*; 19; 87-101. doi: 10.1177/0267323104040696.

Thompson, J. 1995. *The media and modernity: a social theory of the media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Correspondence address:

Dobrinka Peicheva , Prof., PhD and DSc.
South West University, Department of Sociology
66 "Iv.Mihailov" Str.
2700 Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
E-mail: peichevad@gmail.com